

Fides IN FLAVIAN LITERATURE



Edited by
ANTONY AUGOUSTAKIS,
EMMA BUCKLEY, *and* CLAIRE STOCKS

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EMMA BUCKLEY, AND CLAIRE STOCKS

Fides in Flavian Literature



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ABBREVIATIONS

With the exception of the items in the following list, all abbreviations of literary texts in this volume follow the *OCD*.

LTUR = E.M. Steinby. 1995. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. Vol. 2. Rome.

OCRE = *Online Coins of the Roman Empire*. <http://numismatics.org/ocre/>

RIC I = C.H.V. Sutherland and R.A.G. Carson. 1984. *Roman Imperial Coinage*. Vol. 1. *From 31 BC to AD 69*. Rev. ed. London.

RIC II = I.A. Carradice and T.V. Buttrey. 2007. *Roman Imperial Coinage*. Vol. 2, Part 1. *From AD 69 to AD 96*. Rev. ed. London.

RRC = M.H. Crawford. 1974. *Roman Republican Coinage*. 2 vols. Cambridge.

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FIDES IN FLAVIAN LITERATURE

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Introduction

ANTONY AUGOUSTAKIS, EMMA BUCKLEY,
AND CLAIRE STOCKS

Defining *Fides* (1): A Synchronic Analysis

Fides, loosely translated as “good faith,” was no mere buzzword, but a foundational principle of and for Flavian Rome. Featuring prominently as a legend, together with *publica* and *exercituum*, on the coinage of the new regime, this was a public-facing message from Vespasian and his sons, used to cement a new dynasty: to blazon *fides* was to declare that Rome was on a good-faith footing, under the care of a family able to promote the public good over private interests, and – through the loyalty of its armed forces and its reconciliation of the factions – to secure stability and peace following an extreme period of civil conflict.

But what did *fides* mean to Flavian Rome at large? The focus of this volume is the range of response generated by this return of and to *fides*, and though it does not claim to offer the comprehensive “last word” on *fides* in Flavian Rome, it aims to show that *fides* in this period was subjected to a particularly striking and special brand of contestation and re-conceptualization. Superficially, *fides* is a term easy to grasp, a concept in universal currency: politicians today assert that they work for the public good; brands build loyalty; lovers pledge fidelity; each of us every day is involved in various types of social exchange that are underpinned by the assumption of good faith. But of course such easy universalizing can be misleading. *Fides* was perhaps the paradigmatic “Roman” character-value, and a culturally contingent concept. An ideal that is recurrent everywhere in Roman discourse, especially when it considers right behaviour and reciprocal relationships, *fides* encompassed a semantic range that included anything from the most intimate of personal and family relationships to international law and war, and it developed in concert with the nation state of Rome itself, evolving with Rome’s

shifting socio-political and economic position, as its extensive documentation in material and literary sources shows.¹

Representing trust, confidence, or faith, *fides* incorporated the relationships that individuals, communities, and states had with each other; at the local and state level, it was the foundation for political and legal institutions, the societal bond between ruler(s) and ruled, and on the international stage, it governed relationships with allies and foes alike. *Fides* was closely associated with *pietas* for the Romans, as well as *virtus* and *iustitia*.² The XII Tables reinforced the sacred character of *fides* by codifying its breaking as a sacrilege (Cic. *Off.* 3.111). From its original application, guaranteeing the oath between Rome and its neighbours, *fides* came to be employed in diplomatic and military relationships,³ as can be seen in the accounts of Caesar, Sallust, and Livy.⁴ Indeed, *fides* was deeply rooted in Rome's national consciousness and worshipped as the divinity Fides from Rome's earliest history (at least according to Livy, as will be discussed below), with a temple on the Capitol, which housed Rome's international treaties: she figured as the deity who was guarantor of public trust and whose support was necessary for Rome's prosperity and stability. And when *fides* was used to seal the relationship between patron and client, it defined the two parties as morally and religiously bound in a "contractual relationship."⁵ Thus it came to serve as a model for the special relationship that existed, in the republican period especially, between the general and his soldiers, and, during the empire, between the emperor and his subjects. Caesar, for instance, expanded the concept of *fides* so that it referred to the loyalty he had won during his campaigns in Gaul from foreign kings and nations, and the obligation that bound these foreign nations to their new *patronus*.⁶

Naturally enough, then, *fides* has not gone unnoticed in the scholarship of Roman literature, culture, and history. The earliest and still very useful works on *fides* are those by Fraenkel and Heinze, while Freyburger, who concentrates on the semantic and religious uses of *fides* from its origins in early antiquity to the Augustan period, remains an excellent study.⁷ More recently, Teresa Morgan provides a valuable synthesis and overview of *fides* in the early principate, as part of a monumental study of the language of faith in the New Testament, while Marc de Wilde has traced the impact of Roman *fides* on the foundation documents of international law and philosophy in the early modern period.⁸ And of course analysis of *fides* has already been integral to many important literary studies of Roman elegy, historiography, lyric, and epic.⁹ The wide range of meanings for *fides* together with the wide range of contexts within which it is employed are testament to the impact that this value had upon Roman society and culture.

Defining *Fides* (2): A Diachronic Survey

As Freyburger showed in his monograph, *fides* is a function of political and moral usage, but this is predicated upon its importance within the religious context (if, indeed, such easy distinctions between politics and religion can be supported). Both Plutarch (*Numa* 16.1) and especially Livy (1.21.4)¹⁰ record that Numa was the first to build a temple to Fides, illustrating not just its antiquity but also its deeply rooted religiosity in the Roman consciousness. While Ogilvie believes that the association of the cult of *fides* with Numa was probably an anachronism, since “the conceptual character of her name, unlike Ops or Salus, rules out any early date and indeed it is recorded that A. Atilius Calatinus (consul 258 and 254) was responsible for building her temple (Cicero, *de Nat. Deorum* 2.61),”¹¹ Livy’s desire to associate this goddess with Rome’s second king and first giver of laws speaks of an inclination among Roman authors, at least from the Augustan period onwards, to twin Fides closely with Rome’s moral and ideological origins.

Livy’s tendentious accreditation of Fides to King Numa was, of course, no accident. For *fides* – always a dynamic concept – became a particularly hotly contested site of meaning as the republic began to rise and fall. Together with frugality and worship of the gods, a commitment to *fides* is pinpointed by Sallust as the bedrock of early Rome’s *concordia* (*Cat.* 9.3): it was only after the “turning-point” of Rome’s fortune – victory over Carthage – that Rome began to decline, and that decline, Sallust argues, was marked by the corruption of *fides*, integrity, and other virtuous behaviour (*iamque avaritia fidem probitatem ceterasque artis bonas subvertit*, *Cat.* 10.4). Such analysis of social disorder and failing *fides*, and the concept’s contestation and collapse in the final stages of the republic, put *fides* at the heart of the break-up of society: the warring factions declared their concern for *publica fides*, making it the very grounds for their discord.¹² In *De Officiis*, Cicero had conceptualized *fides* idealistically, in terms of the “sacred trust” granted to magistrates and office-holders, whose purpose was to uphold the law and the honour of the state:

est igitur proprium munus magistratus intellegere se gerere personam civitatis debereque eius dignitatem et decus sustinere, servare leges, iura describere, ea fidei suae commissa meminisse. (Cic. *Off.* 1.124)

It is, therefore, the magistrate’s particular task to understand that he represents the state and that he ought to uphold its dignity and honour, to preserve the law, to dispense to all their constitutional rights, and to remember that all this has been committed to him as a sacred trust.

Under the strains placed by powerful individuals on the system of government, however, such a conceptualization of *fides* could not survive; and indeed Cicero's definition must have seemed naive to an audience who had watched the factionalism and struggles for political supremacy couched in the language of *fides* since (at least) the time of the Gracchi.

The notion that *fides* was to be synonymous with political allegiance can be seen particularly starkly at the end of the republic, and during the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. In one of the most notorious episodes of the civil war, a Pompeian army under Afranius surrendered and pled innocence before Caesar: *quod fidem erga imperatorem suum Cn. Pompeium conservare voluerint* ("because they wanted to keep their loyalty towards their commander, C. Pompey," *Civ.* 1.84.3).¹³ For Caesar, this is the flawed *fides* of a commander who cannot count on the fidelity of his own men, who has pledged allegiance to Pompey, not the state, and whose oath is accompanied by the betrayal of the *iusiurandum* (*Civ.* 1.76.3).¹⁴ *Fides*, in this context, is no longer attached to Rome but to an individual, who acts as his soldiers' "special patron."¹⁵ But, of course, Caesar's own claim to be the representative of true *fides* was at least just as tendentious: Lucan's Neronian rewrite of the episode knowingly exploits this, when he has Afranius stand before his conqueror, demand pardon, and claim:

non partis studiis agimur nec sumpsimus arma
consiliis inimica tuis. nos denique bellum
invenit civile duces, causaeque priori,
dum potuit, servata fides.

(Luc. 4.348–51)

We were not motivated by any factionalism, nor did we take up arms out of hostility to your purpose: it was the civil war that contrived to make us generals, and we kept faith to our former cause, while we could.

The difficulty scholars have with assessing Afranius' sincerity here is telling.¹⁶ Afranius is characterized by Lucan as a Stoic sage, unconcerned for his own life (4.337–43), and yet his speech is a brazen declaration of his abandonment of *fides* when circumstances demand, to say nothing of his rather un-Stoic plea for personal survival (as well, perhaps, as a more acceptable request for mercy for his troops, 4.344–62). And this whole speech turns out to be a lie anyway: after being released without harm by Caesar, Afranius infamously took up arms against Caesar again. But this encounter does not simply (and momentarily) suggest that the cause of Caesar is the cause of *fides*. For when Caesar smiles serenely and remits punishment (4.363–4), he is not appealing to Afranius to re-join in a mutual bond of *fides*, conditioned by reciprocity and equal status: rather he is behaving as a monarch

dispensing *clementia*, arrogating to his own person the kind of power that should be entrusted to the state. In this ever-receding hall of mirrors, Lucan articulates the challenges of understanding *fides* when the state itself has broken down, and pinpoints the circumstances in which *fides* as “good faith in the service of the state” transforms into *fides* as a relationship based on personal loyalty. “Traditional” *fides* is not just broken in periods of civil war: its very status is contested and evolves, part of the struggle not just for power but for a narrative that can legitimate and endorse that power.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the rehabilitation of *fides* was at the heart of the Augustan settlement. While *fides* may not have “made the cut” when it came to deciding which *virtutes* would feature on the shield of Augustus (*virtus*, *pietas*, *clementia*, and *iustitia*), and in fact did not feature as a legend on any of the coinage of Rome’s first *princeps* (see the chapter by Stocks in this volume), it held a prominent place within Augustan culture and literature. *Fides* also had a strong relationship with these more prominent *virtutes*, especially with *pietas*, one of the defining values of the Augustan regime,¹⁷ and a word that had a similarly wide-ranging semantic use.¹⁸ The close connection between *pietas* and *fides* as *virtutes* for Rome, including under the Flavians, is illustrated by a number of sestertii coins minted in AD 80–1, which depict the legend *Pietas August S C* on the obverse together with an image of Titus and Domitian clasping hands in a sign of *concordia*, or good-faith, *fides* (RIC II.1² Titus 159 and 160).¹⁹ All of the Augustan *virtutes*, moreover, including *fides*, feature in the *Res Gestae*, especially where Augustus himself refers to the many peoples who had experienced the benefits of Rome’s trust (*plurimaeque aliae gentes expertae sunt p. R. fidem*, 32.6).

Fides was certainly as important in literary responses to the first principate. Livy’s Augustan history returns to Sallustian notions of *fides* and *concordia*, writing the history of Rome itself as a repeated testing of Roman trust in the face of allied defections (e.g., after the sack of Rome by the Gauls, or the defection of Capua after Cannae), and framing the particular complexities and tensions surrounding the treatment of treaties and allies at the outbreak of the Punic wars as a test of Roman character on the crucible of *fides*, in an account that engages with the stereotypical antitype to Carthaginian perfidy – *Punica fides* – which will be a rich source for later writers and poets.²⁰ The hero of Virgil’s *Aeneid* will be famed for his *pietas*, but it could be argued that this Augustan epic is just as interested in a greater narrative project of Romanization that pivots on the successful reorientation of the Trojan prince Aeneas as prototypical Roman man of *fides*: no easy feat given Roman stereotypes of the perfidy of the east more generally, and the example of Paris in particular. Virgil faces the problem head-on in

his Carthage episode, making an attack on Aeneas' *fides* through the voice of Dido, blending the elegiac conceit of the lover scorned with foreshadowing of a much more politically charged *Punica fides*. Certainly Virgil finds time to predict the arrival of Fides in Rome in the Jovian prophecy that will culminate with a "Caesar" (A. 1.292).

Defining *Fides* (3): Flavian *Fides*

This brief survey of the semantic range of *fides* and its evolution within Rome, together with some examples of its deployment and problematization in the literature and material culture, should offer some sense of what was at stake, then, when the Flavian *gens* decided to make *fides* the cornerstone of its identity, the bedrock of its legitimacy, and the foundation of its promise to bring back peace and stability to Rome. Such an appeal to *fides* was, also, and very importantly, an appeal that would bind this new dynasty securely to an Augustan and more broadly Julio-Claudian past, at the same time overwriting the betrayal of *fides* represented in the reign of Nero and the civil discord that followed. In its public building program, its coinage policy, and even within its system of government, the Flavian *principes* were determined to display conspicuous bonds of *fides*, both with each other (via the series of monuments and later temples honouring the defied members of the *gens Flavia*) and with the *populus Romanus* (shown in the return to the people of the parts of Rome overtaken by Nero for the *domus aurea* and magnificent public building projects such as the Colosseum).

At the same time, those who witnessed this reconstitution and rehabilitation of *fides* in Rome must have been struck by the extent to which such a project must necessarily invite recollection of the term's civil war roots. For those who meant to govern in the wake of the civil wars of AD 68–9 were also responding to repetitions of failed *fides*: Galba, Vitellius, and Vespasian all employed the term on their coinage in an attempt to unite the people (*Fides Publica*) or the army (*Fides Exercituum*), and the Flavians made *fides* an imperial virtue for the first time.

This was *fides* still, then, but with added edge, as the Flavian authors who look back to the republic, and its complex relationship with *fides*, show (see the chapters by Marks and Buckley in this volume). Some inroads have already been made when it comes to the question of the role of *fides* in the Flavian period, mostly focused on its use in Flavian poetry.²¹ We do not claim in one volume to have achieved an exhaustive overview of all that *fides* represents in Flavian literature; nor have we systematically given each and every author a "moment" in the limelight. Rather, what we hope to have achieved is a volume that uses *fides* as a tool for thinking about the broad cultural changes and anxieties of the Flavian period, as well as its desire to connect to a republican

and imperial (especially Augustan) past. As the first dynasty to govern Rome after the fall of the Julio-Claudians, and as a family in need of validation following a year of civil upheaval, Vespasian and his sons used *fides* as a means of promoting unity following the “bad-faith” of civil war; as we hope these chapters show, some of the authors writing under them were content to follow their lead, though just as many were keen to contest this new imperial script.

This volume finds its origin in a conference that was held at the Radboud University, Nijmegen, in 2015. The theme was *fides* and the aim was to explore its usage in a variety of texts from, or on, the Flavian era, motivated by a desire to see whether in focusing on a concept, rather than an author, we would find any common strategies of representation or currents of thought.²² The papers from that conference, here combined with contributions from other Flavian scholars, aim to show the pervasive nature of *fides* as an ideal – both to be adhered to and abused – throughout Flavian literature. More strikingly, however, these chapters highlight a particular tendency to use *fides* to challenge readers to engage with the language and discourse of their own times; to promote, but also question and problematize, the notion of “civil” readership in response to “civil” wars.

Each chapter can be read as a stand-alone piece, though readers who tackle the whole volume will find some interesting cross-currents and points of contiguity: oscillations between affirmation and devaluation of *fides*; different kinds of destabilization or assertion of authorial, social, and political identity; distinctly gendered concepts of *fides*; and self-conscious efforts to bring private and public *fides* into collision. Throughout, overtly or implicitly, hangs the freighted association of *fides* with a civil war past, and even attempts to overwrite it cannot fail to recall it. We offer some acquiescence to chronology, setting the scene with an investigation of the use of *fides* by the Flavians as a response to the civil wars and Augustan regime (Stocks), and we end with a chapter (Bartera) on Tacitus’ use of *fides* in his *Histories* as a means of reflecting on the Flavian emperors who preceded his own *princeps*, Trajan. Within that frame, we have made an attempt to group chapters according to some basic conceptualizations – politics, myth, history – though we are well aware that many other kinds of equally productive interpretative groupings could be made.

Fides: Flavian Politics

In the opening chapter of this volume, Claire Stocks analyses the role of *fides* in Flavian Rome, taking her cue from the *lack* of representation of the goddess Fides on Julio-Claudian coinage, in contrast with a clear prominence of this as an imperial value in the period, as seen in the numismatic evidence in particular. As she effectively shows, we notice a trend in the transition of *fides* and its broken bonds from the private to the public sphere, especially

after the civil wars of AD 68–9. *Fides* appears in public representations in an attempt by the new imperial dynasty to consolidate its position among the army and people of Rome. Furthermore, while in Augustan literature terms such as *fidus* or its opposite, *perfidus*, abound, especially in the private sphere of interpersonal relations, in Flavian literature, such use of the term *perfidus* acquires public significance. Both in Flavian epic and in the poetry of Martial, *perfidus* is used in the context of civil strife.²³ Roman coins tell a different, but perhaps complementary, story: during the reign of Domitian, especially during a period of civil unrest, *Fides* disappears, perhaps in an effort to assert that the Flavian regime has brought the necessary stability to an empire, which no longer requires *Fides*’ clasped hands to seal it with approval. The disappearance of *fides* as an imperial value also marks the last Flavian emperor’s lack of interest in appealing to a mutually interdependent relationship between ruler and ruled.²⁴

Steve Mason provides a different perspective on Flavian *fides*, examining the connotations of πίστις in the works of the “outsider-insider” Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian writing in Greek, with close connections to the imperial house and Vespasian himself. In his investigation, Mason seeks to identify the personal meaning of loyalty for Josephus as he seeks imperial alliances, especially with Vespasian and Titus. In particular, in his portrait of Vespasian, Josephus creates a blend of toughness and trickery, as the emperor often makes choices that he knows to be wrong. Eventually Vespasian seizes the achievements of his son, Titus, namely the sack of Jerusalem, and appropriates them for his own glory. For Josephus, Vespasian’s greatness serves to valorize the Judaeans and their man Josephus. In contrast, Titus’ portrait is quite distinct: often he is presented as lacking common sense or tactical acumen. Even in one of his monumental achievements, the destruction of the temple, Titus is completely impotent: it is out of his hands, and Titus seems to yield ultimately to the designs of the Jewish god. As Mason points out, these critical portraits by Josephus show that a relationship based on πίστις or *fides* is construed by the Flavian rulers to be one that is also based on judicious criticism: an intelligent Judaeans, proud of his own heritage and people, remains loyal to the new regime, just as the Flavian emperors themselves cultivate a long tradition of warm relations with Jerusalem and expatriate communities.

In the last chapter in this section, Neil Bernstein makes the political personal in his examination of the role of *fides* in building interpersonal relations in Statius’ occasional poems, the *Silvae*. As Bernstein’s analysis shows, *fides* articulates the relationship between the emperor and his subjects or between a patron and his clients, or the more personal connection among members of the same family. The relationship between the emperor

or patron and his protégés is often based on *pietas* as well as *fides*, but it is the latter that is privileged, and, Bernstein argues, Statius adds nuanced connotations of a quasi-religious loyalty displayed toward the godlike emperor. In familial relations, such as those between husband and wife, *fides* acquires a more personal tone: Statius' wife, Claudia, refuses to follow her husband to Naples, a place of repose and retirement, which the husband perceives as a lack of *fides* and attempts to reverse by a series of mythological exempla that would persuade Claudia otherwise. Bernstein effectively shows that all these relations linked to *fides* are ultimately founded on the security to be found within a sense of hierarchy, guaranteed from the top down by the emperor's superiority to his subjects, but also encoded in the most personal relationships, and set within the context of a highly rhetoricized, peaceful, and idealized literary world that is the *Silvae*.

***Fides*: Flavian Myth**

In the first of four chapters that focus on *fides* in the mythological Flavian epics, Helen Lovatt argues that Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* offers a tendentiously self-aware take on *fides*. Starting with the question of *fides* as "belief" in relation to prophecy, fate, and the divine, Lovatt teases out a constant tension in the *Argonautica*, as the epicist simultaneously presents a narrative powered by divine authority and inspiration, and deliberately undercuts that authorial authority via various literary games with the complex intertextual and mythographical hinterland of the epic. After articulating the difficult and deceptive relationships between humans and gods, Lovatt turns to close examination of the rhetoric of *fides* at Colchis and within the Jason-Medea relationship, charting Valerius' obsessive exploration of the limits of *fides* both "within" the texts between the characters and within his own relationship to the literary tradition and, above all, to his Hellenistic predecessor Apollonius. Concluding that in the first Flavian epic, "[m]oral, religious, literary, and metaliterary faith combine to make Valerius' *Argonautica* both the most faithful and least faithful of epics," Lovatt concludes that Valerius' investigation of the limits of *fides* is indicative of broader literary and political anxieties about the fate of *fides* in Flavian Rome.

Alison Keith examines the depiction of *fides* and its personification in Statius' epic poem, the *Thebaid*. As Keith shows, the dichotomy between public *fides* and private *pietas* is cancelled by the Flavian poet as part of the collapse of interpersonal relations in the poem that recounts the Theban civil war and eventual fratricide. While Statius continues and builds on the representation of *fides* in the framework of republican and Augustan moral codes and

social conventions, at the same time he breaks away from the male-centric model of *fides* to endow women with this virtue. In particular, throughout the poem, Statius depicts the Theban and Argive wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters as displaying good faith, trust, and loyalty in their efforts to help their men. But ultimately such efforts accomplish quite the opposite: these loyal women manage to secure the death of these men and the destruction of their respective cities. Statius's depiction of *fides* in the *Thebaid*, therefore, reflects tensions in the Flavian period, especially as the Flavian dynasty tries to rebuild bonds and the fabric of society after civil war.

Building on these complex nuances of *fides* in the *Thebaid*, Antony Augoustakis examines in detail the Nemean episode that occupies the middle of the poem and its relation to the final book and the conclusion of the war. As Augoustakis shows, the term *fides* is easily manipulated, to the point that it is robbed of meaning, during the course of Statius' bleak account of the Theban civil war. In the Nemean interlude, Hypsipyle entertains the Argive army with stories from her island, Lemnos, where the women kill the menfolk after conspiring against them in the name of *fides*. At the same time, Hypsipyle remains loyal to her father by faking his murder and burial, but she is eventually detected, and her lie exposes the manipulation of *fides* in combination with trickery (*astus*). Likewise, in the final book, the competition between Argia and Antigone again exposes a problematic aspect of *fides*, a term infected by the surrounding civil strife between Argos and Thebes, as well as by the conflict between the two sisters-in-law.

In the final chapter in this section, Dániel Kozák takes *fides* in a different epic direction, bringing us to Statius's unfinished *Achilleid*. Kozák argues that *fides* is central to the first book of this epic, whose narrative structure is based upon a series of deceptions, notably the young Achilles disguised as a girl. Such a display of (a lack of) *fides*, Kozák shows, even extends to the poem itself, which Statius tells us came into being as a result of a lack of faith in his ability to produce an epic on Domitian (1.18–19). Focusing primarily on how the language of *fides* is used to characterize human relationships in the epic, both public and private, and most frequently with apparent cynicism on the part of Statius, Kozák explores the interactions between Achilles and his family members, as well as between Achilles and Deidamia and Achilles and Odysseus. Finally, Kozák shows how understanding the role *fides* plays in these relationships from Achilles' childhood and adolescence – as Statius presents them – offers an opportunity for re-reading Achilles' relationship with Agamemnon in the *Iliad*.

***Fides*: Flavian History**

The third section of this collection concentrates on two distinct Flavian mediations of Roman history: Silius Italicus' epic *Punica* and the *fabula*

praetexta entitled *Octavia*, the latter written by an unknown author at some point after Nero's death, plausibly in the early years of Vespasianic Rome.²⁵ Raymond Marks, focusing on Book 1 of the *Punica*, explores the role that *fides* and *pietas* play in the outbreak of hostilities between Carthage and Saguntum at the start of Silius Italicus' Domitianic epic. Marks draws attention to how Silius plays with the well-established (Roman) tradition of Carthage as the "perfidious" foe at Saguntum and uses the juxtaposition of *fides* with the stereotype of Carthaginian "bad-faith" during the siege to set a moralizing tone for the rest of the epic. In a detailed and nuanced reading of the use of *fides* in the poem's opening lines, Marks notes its religious usage and connection to *pietas*, notably that owed to the gods, especially Jupiter. Focusing on Hannibal's spear-cast (1.304–6), the action that opens hostilities, and the Carthaginian's claim that he holds *fides* in his right hand (1.303–4), Marks notes that Hannibal's actions replicate Roman religious practice and so underscore – for the knowing reader – the faithlessness, as well as impiety, of the Punic general. Ultimately, Marks' chapter illustrates that, in aligning Hannibal with faithlessness and impiety here (and elsewhere in the poem), and Scipio, in contrast, with *fides* and *pietas*, Silius offers a reading of "good faith" versus "bad faith" that has resonance for a dynasty – and for an emperor (Domitian) – attempting to establish itself after the tumult of civil war.

Also focused on *fides* and the *Punica* is Marco Fucecchi's chapter on Hannibal as the (anti-)hero of *fides*. In this chapter, Fucecchi focuses on the traditional perception of Carthage and Rome as polar opposites, with Carthage as the perceived epitome of perfidiousness and Rome as its morally superior foe. Yet such "polarization," as Fucecchi phrases it, does not exclude problematization, and he observes that Rome's dark future of civil war and internal conflicts is hinted at throughout the epic and stands juxtaposed to the idea of Rome as a morally charged city that deserves its place as capital of the world. By focusing predominantly on Carthage, and especially Hannibal and his famed *perfidia*, however, Fucecchi shows that the problematization with respect to *fides* is best expressed through the role played by Rome's legendary foe. For it is Hannibal, Fucecchi argues, who is used by Silius as a vehicle for exploring *fides* in all its guises, culminating in the unexpected revelation that the Carthaginian, after years of fighting in Italy, views himself as tied to Rome and predisposed to offer it his *fides*. Ultimately, Hannibal's perverted sense of *fides* reveals that Rome, despite its problems, achieves the moral high ground in the course of this epic.

Moving from the republic to the principate, from historical epic to historical tragedy, and from the battlefield to the bedroom, Lauren Donovan Ginsberg's chapter on the *Octavia* focuses on the imperial *thalamus* in order to investigate the concept of *fides* in the *Octavia*'s presentation of its imperial

women, both personal and political. Responding to the conceptual framework of *fides* in Propertian elegy, she makes Propertius' world of conflicting loyalties and fractured ethics a lens through which to view the *perfidia* of the Julio-Claudian empresses. Ginsberg first shows that Claudius' wives are written to elegiac stereotypes: Agrippina, the greedy *meretrix* who enslaves her *amator* Claudius; and Messalina, whose elegiac *perfidia* amounts to treason against the state. Next Ginsberg traces powerful elegiac counter-currents as Poppaea is cast as arrogant mistress (*paelex*) and Octavia the "abandoned lover" who, at the same time, is conspicuously reluctant to show *fides* or *amor* to Nero. Finally, Ginsberg gestures to the dangerous potential of imperial women to inspire passion and devotion in the *populus*, arguing that *both* choruses of the play have good political justifications for their displays of *fides*. The result, she argues, is a re-casting of the history of the pre-Flavian principate that puts the elegiac *domina* at the centre of imperial power, making conflicts of erotic and political loyalty not just a tragedy of Neronian Rome but also an explanation for the downfall of an entire imperial dynasty. The *Octavia*, Ginsberg concludes, "actively participates in the early renegotiation of the cultural memory of Rome's first dynasty and especially of its powerful women," making gendered dynastic strife an index against which a new Flavian family could be measured, and a warning for the new imperial *domus*.

In the second chapter devoted to the *Octavia* in this volume, Emma Buckley broadens the perspective to examine the ideological functions and socio-political resonances of *fides* and Roman identity at the state level. Starting with the debate between Seneca and Nero, she argues that the *Octavia* stages a contest for the meaning of *fides* between tutor and pupil derived from the monarchic ideology of *fides* in Seneca's *De Clementia*, a contest in which the *Octavia*'s character-Seneca seeks to stress the ideal reciprocity and mutual interdependence of ruler and ruled, while his pupil instead looks to moments in Seneca's work that hint at a more unbalanced vision of *fides* as "slavish loyalty." She then investigates the consequences of Nero's corrupt *fides* in his relationship with his soldiers, wife, and citizens, paying special attention to the efforts of the Roman *populus* (the first chorus of the *Octavia*) to articulate and reassert their own understanding of the right kind of *fides* between *princeps* and *populus*. Lastly, she considers the final choral ode of the play, and the Roman people's struggle to continue to assert an "objective" legitimacy to *fides*, even as it acquiesces to an imperial script that writes failed *fides* as fickle *favor*, and suggests that the *Octavia* leaves us with a strikingly "Flavian" interpretation. Whether composed under Vespasian or before his accession, this play's contaminating deconstruction of *fides*, even as it seems to acquiesce to a new imperial context proclaiming the

straightforward return of *fides*, is one that certainly speaks to the negotiation of *fides* as a double-edged sword made by the other Flavian literature under examination in this collection.

Revisiting Flavian *Fides*

The final chapter in this volume, by Salvador Bartera, offers an opportunity to reflect on the role of *fides* under the Flavians, through close attention to the resonances of the term in Tacitus' *Histories*. Focusing predominantly on military *fides*, Bartera observes that over half of the examples of *fides* in the *Histories* occur in a context that associates the term firmly with the army as well as with its moral counterpart, *perfidia*. Through the juxtaposition of *fides* with *perfidia*, Bartera is able to argue that military leaders who make a claim for *fides* often suffer as a result of its absence (for example, Galba, the first leader to strike a coin displaying *fides*, is presented by Tacitus as the first to experience a lack of loyalty from his troops as a result of his own questionable morality). Ultimately, Bartera argues that Tacitus' use of *fides* in the *Histories* is far from random and, rather, plays an integral part in showing how the Flavians emerged from the *perfidia* of civil war to reclaim some semblance of moral high-ground. Although written at a time when civil conflict was becoming a distant memory, the *Histories*, with its focus on the destructive nature of civil war, ensures that Tacitus' readers never lose sight of the fact that the Flavian dynasty came to prominence on the back of civil bloodshed. Bartera argues that Tacitus offers his readers a vision of Rome that reflects the Flavians' concern with *fides* and their desire to harness its moral value after a year of conflict. In doing so, his chapter serves as a counterpart to Stocks' on *fides* under the Flavians and acts as a closural piece for this volume as a whole.

NOTES

We are heavily indebted to Salvador Bartera for much of the background information on Roman *fides* included in this chapter, and we would like to thank him for allowing us to incorporate some of his work here.

- 1 Caston 2012: 143, in the context of a study of Roman love elegy, provides a useful general definition: "*Fides* is a concept that permeated many areas of Roman life, both private and public. In essence it represents the faith, trust, or confidence that individuals or states have in each other or in the gods, and as such involved obligations in the home (e.g., marriage), in the city (e.g., patronage and the duties of the senate), and abroad (e.g., diplomacy or war).

The demonstration of *fides* is meant to be reciprocated: it is part of an exchange in which there are expectations in return.” A sign of the extent to which *fides* pervaded Roman society and culture, before, during, and after the Flavian period, is offered by the expansive entries for this word in the *TLL* (vi.1 661–91) and *RE* (6.2881–6).

- 2 See, e.g., Lind 1992. The temple of Fides was on the Capitol, near the temples of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and of Iustitia. It was built by A. Atilius Calatinus (cos. 258 BC) and restored by M. Aemilius Scaurus in 115 BC (Cic. *N.D.* 2.61). See Platner and Ashby 1929: 209 and Richardson 1992: 151. On the cult of Fides, see Freyburger 1986, esp. 259–73 for the temple, and Clark 2007a: 167–70 and *passim*. For a topography of the Capitol, see Freyburger 1986: pl. XIV–XVI, with more details in Reusser 1993. Fides, however, always remained a minor deity, also during the empire (Liebeschuetz 1979: 179). Cicero discusses *fides* at length in his works, including its etymology (for which see Maltby 1991: 232). For the relevant passages, see *LTUR* II 249–52 (Reusser 1993); Fromchuck 1972; Freyburger 1986; and Clark 2007a.
- 3 On this use of *fides*, see Freyburger 1986: 200–5 and Morgan 2015: 77–122.
- 4 Cf., e.g., Caes. *Gall.* 1.3 (describing some Gallic insurgents who banded together and gave mutual pledges): *hac oratione adducti inter se fidem ac iusiurandum dant* (“persuaded by this speech they swore an oath of loyalty”; see Grillo 2012: 64); Sall. *Cat.* 44.3: *ut Allobroges ... cum Catilina data et accepta fide societatem confirmarent* (“that the Allobroges confirm their association with Catiline, having given and received mutual promises of loyalty”). For *fides* in Livy, see Gruen 1982 and Moore 1989: 35–50. In Tacitus, this particular use of *fides* is obviously found more in the *Annals* (Fromchuck 1972: 212–16).
- 5 Again codified in the XII Tables as such (cf. Virg. *A.* 6.608–9: *hic* (sc. in Tartarus) ... *fraus innexa clienti* with Horsfall 2016: *ad loc.*). Fromchuck 1972: 209–16 notes that, in the *Histories*, *fides* in this context is used mainly in connection with the Flavians. On *fides* in the patron-client relationship, see Freyburger 1986: 149–60; Hellegouarc’h 1972: 28–35; Verboven 2002: 39–41; and Lavan 2013: 176–210 (with further bibliography). On contractual *fides*, see, e.g., Lind 1992: 18. On personal patronage under the early empire, see Saller 1982.
- 6 Caesar’s loyalty toward his clients is confirmed by Suet. *Jul.* 71.1: *studium et fides erga clientes*. Caesar’s relationship with foreign nations represents only the latest development of an essentially Roman practice that had been employed for centuries; see Badian 1958. An important episode of such *fides* involves the Aeduan brothers Dumnorix and Divitiacus (*Gall.* 1.19.2).
- 7 Fraenkel 1916; Heinze 1928; Freyburger 1986).
- 8 Morgan 2015; de Wilde 2011.
- 9 See, e.g., Caston 2012 on elegy and Fromchuck 1972 on Tacitus’ *Histories*.

- 10 Livy 1.21.4: *et soli Fidei sollemne instituit. ad id sacrarium flamines bigis curru arcuato vehi iussit manuque ad digitos usque involuta rem divinam facere, significantes fidem tutandam sedemque eius etiam in dexteris sacratam esse* ("He also established an annual worship of *Fides*, to whose chapel he ordered that the *flamines* should proceed in a two-horse hooded carriage, and should wrap up their arms as far as the fingers before sacrificing, as a sign that faith must be kept, and that even in men's clasped hands her seat is sacred"). On this passage, see Clark 2007a: 167–70. For a detailed analysis of all the ancient sources, see especially Fromchuck 1972: 1–28 and Freyburger 1986.
- 11 Ogilvie 1965: *ad loc.* adds that the term *flamines* is used here by Livy as a synonym of *sacerdotes*, for there was no *flamen* attached to the cult of *Fides*. Cf. Freyburger 1986: 250–1; *LTUR* II 252 (J. Aronen).
- 12 In her survey of *pistis/fides*, Morgan 2015: 89 notes the "intense interest" of late republican authors in *fides*: for further analysis of the role of *fides* in republican society, see, e.g., Hellegouarc'h 1972: 23–8, 275–6; Lind 1989: 5–13.
- 13 See Grillo 2012: 85–8, esp. 88n35.
- 14 Caesar's reply (*Civ.* 1.85.2), that his army had suffered *iniuria* from Afranius, confirms the close relationship that, as we have seen, existed between *fides* and *iustitia*. On Caesar's *fides* and its importance "to the picture Caesar creates of himself in the *Civil War*," see Batstone and Damon 2006: 140, quoted at Coffee 2009: 144n35.
- 15 Cf., e.g., Coffee 2009 with regard to Lucan: "*Fides* vanishes in all forms after the death of Julia ... *fides*, like *virtus* (6.147–8), can be an offense in time of civil war. The loss of *fides* and *pietas* means a complete breakdown of the social order secured by reciprocity" (120–1), and "Such limited expectations for Roman *fides* show how far the virtue has degenerated and how perilous it is for Pompey to continue to rely on it" (158).
- 16 See especially Masters 1992: 74–90 in confrontation with Ahl 1976 here.
- 17 Augustan *pietas*, epitomized by the image of Aeneas carrying his father, Anchises, out of Troy, featured on Augustan coinage (as it had previously featured on republican coinage), and *pius Aeneas* (e.g., Virg. *A.* 1.220) appeared prominently in Augustan iconography, including the *Ara Pacis*. See, for example, DeRose Evans 1992: 52–4.
- 18 An indication of the wide range of meanings for *pietas* is indicated by the entry in the *TLL* x.1 2086.50–2105.25. The entry for *fides* is similarly colossal (vi.1 661.69–691.68). The pairing of *pietas* with *fides* (among other *virtutes*) as ideals that represent stable government and good leadership is illustrated by Seneca the Younger in *De Clementia* (e.g., 2.1.4) and particularly in the *Thyestes*, where Atreus' servant claims that, without *pietas* and *fides*, "power" (*regnum*) is unstable, only to be shot down by the king himself, who claims

that such ideals are for the private good: (S) *ubi non est pudor/ nec cura iuris sanctitas pietas fides, / instabile regnum est*. (A) *sanctitas pietas fides / priuata bona sunt. qua iuuat reges eant* (S: “Where there is no shame, no care for law, no sanctity, piety, trust, power is unstable.” A: “Sanctity, piety, trust are private goods. Kings may go where they please,” *Thy.* 215–18, trans. Boyle). Boyle 2017: 189–90 notes that Seneca’s use of *pietas* is often ironic, further complicating our reception and understanding of this ideal, coupled with *fides*.

- 19 On the image of clasped hands as a sign of *fides*, see Stocks’ chapter in this volume.
- 20 On Livy and *fides*, see especially Groves 2013 for the regal period to the fall of Carthage and Rhodes.
- 21 Further works on *fides* includes Ramelli 2002, who discusses and translates (into Italian) three “classic” works: Fraenkel 1916, Heinze 1928, and Boyancé 1962. See also D’Agostino 1961; Hellegouarc’h 1972: 23–40; Piccaluga 1981; Fears 1981: 843n67, 847–8n76; Gruen 1982: 51–2; Clark 2007a; and Morgan 2015: 72–121.
- 22 For a seminal study that attempts to come to grips with Flavian Rome as a period while acknowledging the differences and discontinuities within it, see Boyle and Dominik 2003; cf. more recently the collection of essays in Zissos 2016b.
- 23 Cf. the chapter by Ginsberg in this volume, who argues that the author of *Octavia* treats the elegiac *perfidia* of the imperial women of the Julio-Claudian line as treason against the state.
- 24 Cf. the depiction of Nero and his disregard for *fides*, explored by Buckley in this volume.
- 25 For further discussion that rehearses the possible dates of composition for the *Octavia*, see Buckley in this volume.

PART I

Fides: Flavian Politics

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Broken Bonds: Perfidy and the Discourse of Civil War

CLAIRE STOCKS

In AD 73, the Flavians produced denarii, probably minted in Rome, which depicted Vespasian on the obverse and an image of clasped (right) hands on the reverse accompanied by the legend *Fides Publ[ica]* (RIC II.1² Vespasian 520; see [figure 2.1](#)).¹ This coin was one of several types produced by the Flavians that utilized the theme of *fides* and that included several issues of coins depicting the image of clasped right hands, such as sestertii produced in AD 71 featuring the legend *Fides Exercituum*.² That the Flavians used coinage to promote imperial themes has been well documented, particularly by Caradice and Buttrey,³ and the prominence of *fides* on these early examples from Vespasian's reign are indicative of its importance to the imperial image. *Fides*, a term that was prevalent throughout Roman literary texts of the imperial age, but absent from Julio-Claudian coinage, was now used by the Flavians to consolidate their power after the civil war of AD 68–9; they were giving *fides* a “public” face.

Why *fides* should matter as an imperial theme for the Flavians when it did not feature at all on Julio-Claudian coinage is the starting point of this chapter. Focusing on the image of clasped right hands on both coins and in texts, the bond of *fides* that this represented, and specifically the cry of “perfidy” (notably the masculine vocative *perfide*) that was uttered when that bond was broken, this chapter aims to demonstrate how the portrayal of these elements in poetry from the Julio-Claudian to the Flavian era reflected a wider trend in the transition of *fides* and its broken bonds from the private to the “public” sphere, notably that of the civil war of 68–9.

The Augustan Precedent

The influence of Augustan poets on Flavian authors has been extensively documented.⁴ So, too, numerous studies have illustrated how the Flavian



2.1 RIC II.1.² Vespasian 520 (example from the British Museum, R.10390. Image source [http://numismatics.org/ocrc/id/ric.2_1\(2\).ves.520](http://numismatics.org/ocrc/id/ric.2_1(2).ves.520)).

emperors gave legitimacy to their rule by anchoring it to an Augustan past. The emperor Vespasian, for example, made extensive use of Augustan themes – notably *pax* (peace) – on his coinage,⁵ while the emperor Domitian emulated Augustus (as well as Claudius) by holding the Secular Games (in AD 88) and by manipulating the Roman calendar, so as to impose himself and his *gens* onto Roman “time.”⁶

With respect to their use of *fides*, *perfidus*, and particularly the vocatives *perfida/perfide*, the Flavian poets also appear to have looked to an Augustan precedent – namely to poetic works where the cry of *perfide* was often accompanied by a woman’s accusation that a bond of *fides*, sealed through the clasping of right hands, had been broken.⁷ But while acts of *fides* and *perfidia* are amply on display in Augustan literature, symbols of *fides*, either as the eponymous goddess or – as is strikingly represented on Flavian, and especially Vespasianic, coinage – as clasped right hands, does not feature at all on Augustus’ coinage, and even its presence in Augustan material culture at large is uncertain.⁸ At first glance, then, while *fides* remained a part of Roman life under Augustus, it does not appear to have been a defining theme of his principate, nor of the Julio-Claudian emperors who came after him.⁹

This absence is, arguably, puzzling. For Augustus, like the Flavians, assumed the principate on the back of a civil war. So too he, like Vespasian, promoted the theme of *pax*, to some extent on his coinage¹⁰ but more

notably through building works that included an altar to Pax, the *ara Pacis*. This approach was later imitated by Vespasian, when he built a temple to Pax (AD 71–5) with the spoils from the Jewish war, an edifice that was ten times the size of its inspiration.¹¹ From the numismatic evidence that remains, it is clear that Augustus used coinage to promote themes that were important to him and, moreover, themes that are recognizable from other sources, including literary texts.¹² It might be expected, therefore, that *fides*, too, would have played a more extensive role in Augustus' new-look Rome, offering a symbol of reconciliation after the civil war with Antony.

That *fides* had a role to play in Rome's discourse of civil war is affirmed by its appearance (or lack thereof) on Rome's coinage after the reign of Augustus. For *fides* did not feature at all on Rome's imperial coinage until the civil war of AD 68–9 and the reign of Galba, when it appears briefly on an issue of dupondii and asses in the guise of *Fides Publica*, accompanied by the image of the standing goddess holding a cornucopia (RIC I² Galba 135 [dupondius] and 138 [as]).¹³ With the short reign of Vitellius, however, on coins dating to 69 (e.g., RIC I² Vitellius 67), *fides* became far more prominent as a legend, often depicted on the reverse of coins accompanied by the word *exercituum* and the image of clasped right hands.¹⁴

Fides, then, appears prominently as a theme associated with the aftermath of civil war and as part of an attempt by new emperors to consolidate their position among the army and people of Rome. The issue, therefore, of why *fides* was significant enough as an ideal to merit an appearance on Flavian coinage minted in Rome, but played little, if any, role during the reign of Rome's first *princeps* is an intriguing one – the more so when we consider that Augustan poets did not shy away from dealing with the motifs of civil war.¹⁵

Augustan Poets and the Cry of *Perfide!*

In contrast to the numismatic evidence, the presence of *fides* and *perfidia* in literary texts from the Augustan era is extensive, with a cursory search producing literally hundreds of results from epic, elegiac, and historiographic works (among others). To give focus to the debate in this chapter, therefore, I have chosen to limit my discussion to a particular set of sub-data – namely, the vocative *perfide* in the works of Augustan and Flavian authors. The choice is far from random. The relatively rare occurrence of the vocative makes feasible the study of its usage in the entirety of literary works from these periods, and, more specifically, the cry of perfidy in these texts gives focus to an accusation that someone has broken a bond of *fides*, typically a bond that would have been sworn by the right hand.

The vocative, in drawing attention to the person at whom it is directed, by reflex also draws attention to the word that is in that case. With respect to *perfidus*, therefore, the vocative focuses the reader's attention on the supposed act of betrayal as much as on the individual who has broken the bond of *fides*. In extant Latin literary texts from the early principate, the masculine vocative of *perfidus* appears fewer than fifty times and almost exclusively in poetic works. *Perfide* is also particularly prevalent in Augustan texts, where it is often used as a cry by anguished individuals berating their erstwhile lovers.

The cry of perfidy in Augustan poetry is found, perhaps not surprisingly, most prominently in the works of the elegiac poets, and there it is not limited to the masculine vocative, *perfide*. The poet Propertius, for example, employs *perfida* to criticize his female lovers for their supposed lack of faithfulness (e.g., 2.5.3 and 2.9a.28) and even extends the accusation to the door that blocks his way to love (1.16.43). Tibullus, too, while avoiding the vocative (with the exception of pseudo-Tibullus, where it appears three times in quick succession, 3.6.55–6), also uses *perfida* in reference to a girl who plays him false (1.8.63).

The most striking examples of the vocative of *perfidus* in Augustan poetry are those employed by Virgil (in his *Aeneid*) and especially Ovid thereafter, who makes use of the earlier elegiac context – as well as Catullus 64¹⁶ – to reverse the image of the disconsolate male lover/poet by depicting female figures who have been abandoned by their lovers – lovers who swore, with their right hand, to protect (perhaps even to marry) them.

In the *Aeneid*, the cry of *perfide* occurs twice (4.306 and 366), both employed by Dido in reference to the departing Aeneas:

tandem his Aenean compellat vocibus ultro:
 “dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum
 posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?
 nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam
 nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido? ...”

(Virg. A. 4.304–8)¹⁷

At last, of her own accord, she rebuked Aeneas with these words:
 “Faithless one! Did you really hope that you could hide so great
 a wickedness and leave my land in silence?
 Does our love not hold you back nor the right hand once given
 Nor Dido, soon to die by a cruel fate?”

When Dido calls Aeneas *perfide* here, she is accusing him of dissimulation by having broken the pledge that they made with their right hands (*dextra*,

307), a personal pact – at least in her eyes – of marriage.¹⁸ It is a theme to which she returns at 4.596–9, juxtaposing her public and private roles as she states that she gave up her “authority” (*sceptra*, 597) to be with Aeneas, who had pledged *fides* with his right hand (*dextra*, 597).¹⁹ Given that Aeneas leaves Dido to found the Roman race and to set Roman *imperium* in motion, Dido’s reference to the authority she has given up to be with him is more than a little ironic. But in her mind, at least, there appears to be an incongruity between the oath that she alleges they swore to one another in private and the public role that she once held and had forsaken. More than this, her cry of *perfide* also hints at a conflict between Augustan ideals: Aeneas’ (alleged) breaking of a bond of *fides* occurs precisely because of the *pietas* that he owes to his family, his people, and the gods. *Pietas* (perhaps more than any other of the Roman ideals) was often paired with *fides* (see the discussion in the introduction to this volume), and thus in “calling out” Aeneas for his lack of good faith, Dido builds tension into the Roman value-system, reflecting the conflicting loyalties that we see play out within the city under the early *pricipes*.

These conflicting loyalties first find an outlet within the *Aeneid* itself, during Aeneas’ wars in Italy, which are at times presented as a pseudo civil conflict, and serve as a backdrop to bonds of *fides* (and *pietas*), which will be formed and then broken.²⁰ In Book 7, Ilioneus (at the court of Latinus) swears by Aeneas’ right hand (*dextra*) and *fides* in battle (*fata per Aeneae iuro dextramque potentem, / sive fide seu quis bello est expertus et armis*, “I swear by the fate of Aeneas, and by his right hand, powerful should anyone test it in *fides* or in war and in weapons,” 7.234–5) and in Book 8, Aeneas himself tells Evander to take and offer *fides* (*accipe daque fidem*, 8.150). For the most part, however, the language of *fides* and *perfidia* in the rest of the *Aeneid* remains brooding, and silent, in the background. It plays no role, for example, in the treaties that are sworn, and then broken, save for the ships, now nymphs, in Book 10 who tell Aeneas that they broke their moorings due to the actions of the treacherous Rutulian (*perfidus ... / ... Rutulus*, 10.231–2). *Perfidia* or *perfidus* in their various forms occur on only three other occasions in the *Aeneid*: twice in reference to Aeneas (who is called *perfidus* at 4.421 by Dido and at 7.362 by Queen Amata), and once to the *perfidus ensis* of Turnus that breaks during his combat with Aeneas in Book 12 (731). Such “treachery,” then, for the most part is localized and centred on a relationship between individuals (or individual objects).

The most prominent use of the vocative *perfide* (or *perfida*) in Augustan literature is found in Ovid’s poetry, where it is most frequently employed by

Ovidian heroines as a cry of betrayal following abandonment by their (male) lovers. Like the elegiac poets before him, Ovid is not averse to associating acts of perfidy with women (e.g., *Am.* 3.3.10, *Rem.* 722), although some of these come with caveats, such as in *Metamorphoses* 7.714–52, where Cephalus calls his wife *perfida* (7.742), but only after he has tested their marriage beyond the point of endurance, as he himself recognizes (7.748–50). Among those instances that refer specifically to the cries of “abandoned” women is that of Ovid’s Dido in the *Heroides* (7.79), although the context has been changed from that in Virgil’s *Aeneid*: this Dido does not use the cry of perfidy in reference to their broken bond of marriage, but rather within the context where she is accusing Aeneas of having lied about removing the Penates from Troy and carrying his father on his shoulders out of the burning city. If anything, therefore, *this* Dido puts into even sharper focus the tension between Aeneas’ *pietas* and *fides*, as she undercuts some of the most prominent attributes that marked the Virgilian Aeneas as a protector of Rome’s gods and as man of *pietas*, an attribute that marks him as a decidedly “Augustan” hero.

Other cries of perfidy uttered by women include those of Phyllis to Demophoon (*Ep.* 2.78, where she accuses him of repeating the “guilt” of his father Theseus), Ariadne to Theseus (*Ep.* 10.58 and *Fast.* 3.473),²¹ and Medea to Jason (*Ep.* 12.37). For Phyllis, at least, the crime committed by Demophoon appears all the more serious, not only because he is following in the footsteps of Theseus (both the Ovidian and the Catullan), but because she specifically refers to the bond of *fides* that they swore with their right hands: *iura fidesque ubi nunc, commissaque dextera dextrae* (“and where now is the sworn fides, and the right hand joined to right hand?” *Ep.* 2.30–2).²² Finally, and certainly most harrowingly, is the cry of perfidy uttered by Philomela against her brother-in-law Tereus after he has raped her in *Metamorphoses* 6 (539). Her cry of betrayal not only speaks of a broken bond between a husband and a wife (Tereus and his wife Procne) but refers back to the bond of *fides* that was sworn between Tereus and his father-in-law, when he first travelled to Athens to bring Philomela back with him to visit to her sister:

mandabat pariterque suae dabat oscula natae,
et lacrimae mites inter mandata cadebant;
utque fide pignus dexteras utriusque poposcit
inter seque datas iunxit natamque nepotemque
absentes pro se memori rogat ore saluent;
supremumque vale pleno singultibus ore
vix dixit timuitque suae praesagia mentis.

(Ov. *Met.* 6.504–10)

He was issuing commands and offering kisses to his daughter in equal measure, and soft tears were falling while those commands were uttered; and he requested both their right hands as a pledge of *fides* and joined them together when offered and he asked that they remember to greet both his absent daughter and grandson on his behalf; and at last, his voice broken with sobs, scarcely could he say goodbye and he feared the forebodings of his mind.

Pandion's actions here, as he exhorts promises from his son-in-law and daughter, are designed to seal a pact of *fides* between family members. The setting is still domestic, but is laced with irony as he effectively re-enacts a marriage ceremony between the two by joining their right hands together. Such a scene makes Tereus' subsequent betrayal, and Philomela's cry of *perfidie* thereafter, all the more resonant; but it also hints at the direction in which these broken bonds of *fides*, in literature, are ultimately heading – namely, toward civil war.²³ For while there is no doubting the innocence of Philomela in this episode, both Tereus, in raping his sister-in-law, and even Pandion, by enacting a pseudo marriage rite between his daughter and a man already married to his other daughter, are initiating acts of bad faith within a kin context. They are sowing, effectively, the seeds of civil conflict, and, in corrupting *fides*, they are bringing *pietas* down with it.

Fides, Perfidia, and the Flavian Poets

Flash-forward to our Flavian texts and the cry of *perfidie* is the same, but it has acquired a more (overt) public significance. Heroines who aired their dirty laundry to a “private” audience (us) have been replaced by heroes on the battlefield who accuse rivers of betraying their homeland in the *Punica*, and with brothers killing brothers in front of two armies in Statius' *Thebaid* – in short, with *fides* / *perfidia publica*.

This development in the use of the vocative *perfidie* can arguably be seen in texts prior to the Flavian period, notably in Neronian literature where the epic poet Lucan employs it in reference to the treacherous Susa (8.425) and the treacherous land (8.539), and also has his Cornelia utter it to the departing form of her husband Pompey (8.652). Cornelia's cry of *perfidie*, uttered as Pompey leaves her behind at sea, departing in a ship (like many a hero before him), is more than a little reminiscent of the abandoned women of Ovid's *Heroides*. Yet, while Cornelia perceives Pompey's behaviour as an act of abandonment, the man himself appears to honour his marriage vows by sparing her from a shared fate; for, prior to urging his wife and their son to stay on board, the poet tells us that Pompey obeys

the summons to leave his ship, because he prefers to die rather than show fear (*letumque iuvat praeferre timori*, "death was pleasing in preference to fear," 8.576). So too, Cornelia's cry of betrayal, while focused on a supposed act of perfidy between a man and a woman, is framed by the wider context of civil war: in effect she is suffering the "private" consequences of Pompey's public war with Caesar, suggesting that these two spheres cannot be disassociated from one another.

The final cry of perfidy in Lucan's epic is uttered by the poet himself, at 9.1061, where he calls Caesar "perfidious one" (*perfide*) as he expresses relief that Caesar was not given the opportunity to show mercy to the defeated Pompey.²⁴ To call mercy an act of perfidy may at first glance seem strange, until we remember that *this* Caesar is not only betraying Rome by instigating a war against it, but is betraying his other literary incarnations – notably the frequent portrayal of himself in the *Bellum Gallicum* (and elsewhere) as one who shows mercy to his enemies (e.g., *Gall.* 2.28.3, where Caesar spares the Nervii).²⁵ For how can Caesarian *clementia*, which would later become a trope of emperors from Augustus onwards,²⁶ be anything other than false, in a civil war that Lucan's Caesar himself instigated?

If Lucan's epic sets the scene for the cry of perfidy within the context of civil war, then Statius' Flavian epic, *Thebaid*, which deals with the war between twins Eteocles and Polynices for Thebes, pushes that context further. In the *Thebaid*, there are two examples of the masculine vocative *perfide*, both of which develop its usage beyond the relationship between a man and woman or a husband and wife. The first is spoken by King Lycurgus in reference to Jupiter, where he accuses the god of breaking their pact by failing to protect his infant son Opheltes (*alio tibi, perfide, pacto, / Iuppiter, hunc crinem voti reus ante dicaram / si pariter virides nati libare dedisses / ad tua templa genas*, "for a far-different agreement, perfidious Jupiter, would I have once dedicated this hair to you as fulfilment of my vows if you had granted me in like manner to offer as libation the youthful cheeks of my son at your temple," 6.197–200). Here, civil war arguably plays a back role to the grief of a father for his son, but it is worth noting that Opheltes, although only an infant, is described as the first victim of this civil conflict, a fact reinforced by the changing of his name to Archemorus, "first to die."²⁷ The second cry of perfidy comes at 11.569, the final words uttered by Polynices to his brother as they both die, the *exemplum* of a kin (domestic?) conflict that has brought entire nations to war with one another.²⁸

The two examples of *perfide* in Silius Italicus' *Punica* also illustrate the extension of this cry beyond a "domestic" context. The first, in Book 4, is uttered by the elder Scipio, who accuses the river Trebia of the ultimate act of civil betrayal: turning on its own citizens (*magnas, o Trebia, et meritas mihi*,

perfide, poenas / exsolves, “O Trebia, treacherous one, you will suffer as you deserve and pay great punishments,” 4.643–4).²⁹ The second is spoken by Marcia in Book 6, flung as an accusation against her absent husband Regulus:

tum vero infelix, mentem furiata dolore,
exclamat fessas tendens ad litora palmas:
“En, qui se iactat Libyae populisque nefandis
atque hosti servare fidem. data foedera nobis
ac promissa fides thalamis ubi, perfide, nunc est?”
ultima vox duras haec tunc penetravit ad aures,
cetera percussi vetuerunt noscere remi. (Sil. 6.514–20)

But then the unfortunate wife, out of her mind with grief,
Stretching out exhausted hands towards the shore cried out:
“Look at the man who boasts that he has kept *fides* with the wicked
people of Libya, our enemy. Where now are the pacts you made with me
and the *fides* you pledged at our marriage, traitor?”
This was the final speech that reached the unyielding ears then,
the rest, the oars – driven through the water – prevented him from hearing.

This second example appears to follow the established pattern in Augustan texts, and echoes the *Aeneid*, where Dido is referred to as *infelix* (e.g., *A.* 4.68) and “raging with grief” (e.g., *A.* 4.474).³⁰ Yet this cry of betrayal also comes with a twist, as we see Marcia accuse the man presented by Silius as the ultimate *exemplum* of *fides* (6.62–4) of putting *fides* to a foreign foe above the loyalty he owes to his family. This is perfidy still (the husband betraying the wife), but with a more overt public and political significance, resonating, perhaps, with a Flavian populace that had had to face up to the fact that private bonds of *fides* and the breaking of those bonds had a part to play in the language of civil war.³¹ This scene also revisits the tension between *pietas* and *fides* created by Aeneas’ departure from Dido, and Carthage, in *Aeneid* Book 4. For not only is Regulus reversing Aeneas’ journey by moving toward, rather than away from, Carthage, but he cannot use *pietas* as an excuse. *Fides* and *pietas* are united once more as Marcia reminds her husband that his broken bond of *fides* also violates the *pietas* he owes to his family.

The cry of perfidy within a civil war context receives a clear contemporary twist in the (Flavian) poetry of Martial:

Verbera securi solitus leo ferre magistri
insertamque pati blandus in ora manum

dedidicit pacem subito feritate reversa,
 quanta nec in Libycis debuit esse iugis.
 Nam duo de tenera puerilia corpora turba,
 sanguineam rastris quae renovabat humum,
 saevos et infelix furiali dente peremit:
 Martia non vidit maius harena nefas.
 Exclamare libet: "Crudelis, perfide, praedo,
 a nostra pueris parcere discе lupa!" (Mart. 2.75)

A lion that was used to enduring the beatings of his fearless keeper
 and suffered, fawning, a hand inserted into its mouth
 has suddenly forgotten peace with a return to ferocity
 so great as ought not to have existed in the Libyan hills.
 For two boyish bodies from the youthful crowd
 which was renovating the bloodied ground with rakes
 the unfortunate savage crushed with its raging jaw.
 Mars' sand did not see a greater wickedness.
 One willingly exclaims: "Cruel, faithless, robber,
 Learn from our wolf to show mercy to boys!"

The reference to *perfide* at 2.75.9 appears to be symbolic. Here a former tame lion, once willing to accept a hand being placed on its mouth without biting back, has learnt the art of savagery once it returns to Libyan hills. Clearly linked to Carthage and its famed perfidy, this lion is told by Martial that he should take note of Rome's model – a wolf suckling Romulus and Remus – as an *exemplum* for how one should raise one's children. And yet there is irony here too; Rome might be the wolf that suckles her young, but those same young, who now share a pact made in milk, will grow up as the originators of Rome's civil wars. It would seem, then, that showing mercy is also problematic, since these twin Roman boys will grow up to show savagery akin to the African lion.³²

A second example, at 4.11.10, has even greater contemporary relevance. Here Martial employs the vocative *perfide* in reference to the Roman General Saturninus, who led an insurrection against Domitian in Germany, probably in AD 89.³³

Dum nimium uano tumefactus nomine gaudes
 et Saturninum te, miser, esse pudet,
 impia Parrhasia movisti bella sub ursa,
 qualia qui Phariae coniugis arma tulit.

Excideratne adeo fatum tibi nominis huius,
 obruit Actiaci quod gravis ira freti?
 aAn tibi promisit Rhenus quod non dedit illi
 Nilus, et Arctois plus licuisset aquis?
 Ille etiam nostris Antonius occidit armis,
 qui tibi conlatus, perfide, Caesar erat. (Mart. 4.11)

While you were puffed up and rejoicing too much in an empty name
 and it shamed you, wretch, to be Saturninus,
 you stirred up impious wars beneath the Parrhasian bear,
 just like those of he who bore the weapons of the Egyptian wife.
 Had the fate of this name so completely escaped you,
 that which the fulsome wrath of the Actian strait overwhelmed?
 Or did the Rhine promise you what the Nile did not grant to that man,
 and had it seemed that more would be permitted by Artic waters?
 Even that Antony fell dead at our weapons,
 he who, compared to you, traitor, was Caesar.

As was the case with the lion, this act of betrayal is against someone who should expect loyalty: here, the emperor from his general. But, as was also the case with Martial's use of *perfide* at 2.75.9, in poem 4.11, the poet appears to be playing a deeper game of interchangeability. For it is not one Antonius to whom Martial refers, but two. He links Saturninus to his namesake, Marcus Antonius, who betrayed Caesar Octavian – and Rome – when he sided with the Egyptian queen Cleopatra.³⁴ In doing so, Martial appears to present Saturninus' uprising as a form of foreign conflict as he associates this new Antony with the "foreignness" of the old, and with Cleopatra herself – a reminder of how Octavian/Augustus styled his civil conflict with Antony as a war with Antony's Egyptian consort. And yet, Martial implies, this war is even more foreign than that between Antony/Cleopatra and Octavian, for he ends his poem by telling us that this new Antony, through his act of betrayal, has turned the original into "a Caesar" (*qui tibi conlatus, perfide, Caesar erat*, 4.11.10). Now it is Saturninus who assumes the otherness of Cleopatra, more so than his namesake, and, by association, is cast in the role of the enemy of Rome's people and Senate, with Domitian as their representative.³⁵

Yet, despite casting Saturninus as an Egyptian other, Martial's name games in this poem cause us, once more, to doubt the nature of the conflict that is presented. In 2.75, Martial highlighted the "foreignness" of his lion, only to undercut it with a reference to Rome's (in)famous twins. At 4.11,

Martial appears to do the same again. For, if Domitian's war with Saturninus restores the *romanitas* of the first Antony, turning him not only back into a citizen, but into a Caesar, then surely the potential remains for the same to happen to Saturninus. Despite the pretence at "foreignness," therefore, this is still an act of *perfidia* within civil war.³⁶

Yet, if the Flavian poets remind us of the threat of civil war that is always lurking, albeit with similar subtlety shown by the Augustan authors in later years, that threat – at least in so far as it is associated with *fides* and the image of clasped right hands – is, conversely, increasingly downplayed in Flavian coinage.

Fides, or Ceres, or ...?

Despite the prominence given to the inscription *Fides Publica* on Flavian coinage, especially accompanied by the image of clasped right hands, coinage produced under Domitian shows a shift in how *fides* is portrayed. The Flavian literary examples I offered in the preceding section come from texts dating to the reign of Domitian, yet, as was the case under Augustus, literary texts and the imperial image, as portrayed on coinage, appear to diverge. Unlike with Augustan coinage, *fides* does make an appearance on Domitianic coinage, but its portrayal undergoes a change: now the preference was for the goddess Fides standing with a plate of fruit and ears of corn (probably a symbol of fertility/fecundity, as well as a reminder of the Julio-Claudian emperors, notably Augustus, who also showed a preference for the depiction of corn ears, poppies, and fruit).³⁷ The accompanying legend marks this goddess as Fides, but in appearance there is little to distinguish her from coins depicting the goddess Ceres (e.g. *RIC* II.1² Vespasian 1100) or Fortuna (e.g., *RIC* II.1² Domitian 141–2).

The coins depicting Fides that Domitian issued in Rome all date to AD 84–9 and thus fall firmly within the period in which he had begun to establish his own imperial themes, distinct from those of his father, Vespasian, and brother Titus.³⁸ The issues are limited to dupondii and asses, the smaller dominations, all with the legend *Fidei Publicae S C* and all depicting the goddess Fides.³⁹

If we adhere to the view that Domitian, like his father and brother before him, played a role in the selection of themes for his coinage, then the choice to move away from the image of clasped right hands as the public face of *fides* is striking and implies that this image, with its association with the civil wars of AD 68–9 and its aftermath, had no role to play in Domitian's Rome. More striking still, however, is that Rome's mint appears to have stopped issuing coins depicting Fides in AD 89, having previously issued them in



2.2 RRC 450/2 (example from the British Museum, 2002,0102.4455. Image source <http://numismatics.org/crro/id/rcc-450.2>).

every year since 84. If this were a conscious choice, then it is all the more pertinent, given that the most likely date for the uprising of the general Saturninus in Germany was AD 89. Ironically, then, at the point at which we might expect the emperor to affirm the importance of *Fides* in the face of civil war, the goddess – as far as Domitian’s coinage is concerned – simply disappears.

Octavian: *Fides* and Civil War?

The disassociation of *Fides* from the image of clasped right hands on Domitianic coinage, may be reflective of an emperor who felt detached enough from the events of AD 68–9, in spite of the apparent threats that he still faced, to change the face of “public” *fides*. Yet in this he is also, ironically, drawing closer to Augustus than we might at first suppose.

As noted above, *fides* is absent from late republican/imperial coinage prior to Vitellius, yet the image of clasped right hands is not. Several coins dating to the end of the republic display this image, or that of a right hand stretched out in a gesture of friendship, of which three types are of particular note.

The first is a denarius struck in 48 BC by Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus, which combines the head of *Pietas* or *Pan* on the obverse combined with clasped right hands over a winged caduceus on the reverse and which is thought to refer to Caesar’s offer of *concordia* after the civil war with Pompey (RRC 450.2 [see figure 2.2] and 451.1, respectively).⁴⁰ The second is from the triumvirate of Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus (RRC 494.10–12



2.3 RRC 494/12 (example from the British Museum, 1896,0608.4. Image source <http://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-494.12>).

[see figure 2.3]). Dating to 42 BC, it is part of a series of coins depicting the portraits of one of the three men on the obverse and a mixture of triumvirate themes on the reverse. Numbers 10–12 depict the heads of Lepidus, Antony, and Octavian, respectively, while the reverse shows clasped hands with *C. Veibivs* above and *Vaarvs* below. This image of clasped right hands here, therefore, is surely a reference to the implied *fides/concordia* between the three men – a public statement that they have reached a personal (private) accord.⁴¹

The third coin shows only one hand, a right hand reaching out (from right to left; RIC I² Augustus 531–4 [see figure 2.4]). Minted by the general Lucius Pinarius Scarpus, who was in charge of the province of Cyrenaica under Antony, in 31–30/29 BC, it marks Scarpus' transfer of allegiance from Antony to Octavian. The legend refers to Octavius as “son of a god,” and the outstretched hand symbolizes reconciliation – I would say *fides* – with a former enemy, who is also a fellow Roman, the fallout of fighting a civil war.

If we can assume that these coins used the image of clasped hands, or hands outstretched, to imply a good-faith compact between peers that comes as a result of civil strife or the potential for it, then it would seem that the connection between *fides*, the image of clasped right hands, and a wider context of civil conflict was not limited to the years AD 68–9 and the early Flavian period thereafter. Subsequent coinage depicting Augustus' victory over Antony, together with literary accounts of that battle (e.g., Virgil *A.* 8.675–728), shows that the *princeps* had no desire to forget his triumph at



2.4 RIC I² Augustus 531 (example from the British Museum, 1902.0206.123. Image source [http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1\(2\).aug.531](http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1(2).aug.531)).

Actium. But, crucially, this was not portrayed as a victory on the back of civil war.⁴² Rather, this was a Roman triumph over an Eastern foe, Cleopatra, with Antony playing a subsidiary role. Viewed in this context, it is perhaps not surprising that Augustus should use his coinage to draw attention to other themes at the start of his reign – to a victory and peace that came about as a result of wars that he had fought and won, rather than reconciliation as a result of a civil conflict in which all Rome has suffered casualties.

Conclusion: Where Has All the *Fides* Gone?

In Augustan poetry, the cry of perfidy, which comes as a result of *fides* sworn with the right hand, is the result of a civil or, rather, kin conflict, but its scope is private, limited to the broken bonds between couples. This is not to suggest that acts of perfidy do not exist elsewhere and in different settings: treaties between opposing armies are sworn with the right hand, and in, for example, the *Aeneid*, such treaties are broken – surely an act of perfidy, even if it is not directly referred to thus by the poet. Yet if we take the cry of perfidy, *perfidie*, as a subject for closer analysis, then we can begin to trace a pattern in poets' treatment of proclaimed (or perceived) acts of perfidy that appear to transpose the cry of betrayal from a domestic to a more public context. The cry of *perfidie* is still uttered by Flavian women in imitation of their Augustan counterparts, but these cries are joined by other examples – acts of betrayal on the battlefield and in wars with a distinctly civil context. The

vocative *perfide* thus draws attention to broken bonds of loyalty that extend beyond the context of a marriage to incorporate the loyalty that one owes to one's country and to one's fellow citizens.

Such an extension of the use of this vocative may illustrate the tendency among Flavian poets to engage in the discourse of civil war in a manner that reflects both the debt owed to their Augustan forebears as well as to the brutal portrayal of violence and war as it is portrayed in Neronian literature. But it is worth noting that, parallel to such literary developments, Rome's coinage – arguably a reflection of the *principes'* imperial programs – also introduces the theme of *fides* as a response to civil war. *Perfide* would never have featured as a legend on Rome's coinage, but the presence of *fides* as a legend together with *Publica* or *Exercituum* and accompanied by the image of clasped right hands says as much about broken bonds of loyalty in the face of civil war as it does about the emperors' use of such coins as a means of stabilizing their rule and presenting a public face of reconciliation.

Yet, while poets such as Statius, Silius Italicus, and Martial all employ *perfide* – often in the context of civil war – in texts written under Domitian, that emperor produced only a limited number of issues of *Fides* coins, all depicting her as a goddess who has little to distinguish her from other deities carrying cornucopia. This suggests not so much omission or a master plan on the part of Domitian to eradicate *fides* in connection with clasped hands, but rather that the imperial image machine no longer needed to display clasped hands as a response to civil strife. For Domitian, civil war may have remained a potent threat lurking in the background, as illustrated by Martial's 4.11, but, for the ideology of Rome's imperial coinage, *fides*, with its civil-war edge, as symbolized with the image of clasped hands, was now a distant memory or, as in the case of Augustus before, no memory at all.

It is tempting, even if it is improbable, to think that the disappearance of *Fides* from Domitianic coinage in AD 89 was more than a coincidence. We could perceive the disappearance of the goddess as coinciding with the increasing pressure that Domitian was experiencing on the home front, and that emperor's desire to avoid any suggestion that Rome had returned to its civil war past. Thus, just as Actium for Augustus was a war with Egypt, so Martial at 4.11 stresses (overtly at least) that the uprising of Saturninus was, for Domitian, not a revolt at all, but a war between the emperor and his "foreign" foe, which took place in a location appropriate for the man who called himself Germanicus, the conqueror of Germany.⁴³

Fides would not disappear from Rome forever, but would appear again on Rome's coinage as early as the reign of Nerva.⁴⁴ Yet her disappearance from the final years of Domitian's reign is something that, ironically, is

reflected in Flavian literature. For in the only depiction of the goddess Fides in Domitianic texts, Silius Italicus' *Punica* portrays the goddess on two occasions in his epic: in a fleeting appearance at 13.281–91, where she attempts to inspire the citizens of Capua, and earlier on the battlefield at Saguntum (2.475–525).⁴⁵ Her presence at Saguntum, at the prompting of Hercules, was intended to affirm the loyalty of Saguntine's citizens to Rome and to inspire their final moments. But, prior to Fides' arrival, the goddess tells us that she originally fled the earth because of the wickedness and violence of mankind (2.496–506). And when she is at Saguntum, we are told that she prevents the citizens from prolonging their lives through any form of unnatural behaviour and violence, such as cannibalism (2.524–5). This is her first and final appearance in battle; after this, Tisiphone, sent by Juno, will cause Saguntum's citizens to turn upon themselves in an act of kin-killing that presumably causes the goddess Fides to flee the earth once more. As was the case with the goddess on Domitian's coins, therefore, at the first hint of civil strife, Silius' Fides simply disappears. Her brief return at 13.281–91 suggests that she has not given up on humanity, but she is no longer willing to involve herself in the conflict, instead offering advice from "above" (*ab alto*, 13.281). In this, then, her behaviour is perhaps also reflective of something "bigger," namely that, in Rome's repeat-cycle of civil war, at least under the Flavians, Fides no longer has a role to play. For if Rome is destined, at least in literary terms, to suffer civil war again and again, then no bond of *fides* – sworn with the right hand – will ever fail to be broken. The cry of *perfidie* is all that is left.

NOTES

- 1 Coins displaying *Fides Publ* with the image of hands clasped over a caduceus with two poppies and two corn ears were also produced in AD 76 (RIC II.1² (Vespasian) 1475, 1485, and 1495, probably minted in Asia Minor and displaying the heads of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, respectively, on the obverse). In AD 71, Vespasian also minted two asses in Rome displaying *Fides Publica* on the reverse, one with the image of clasped right hands and the addition of SC at the bottom (RIC II.1² Vespasian 300) and one displaying the goddess Fides standing with corn ears, a poppy, and basket of fruit (RIC II.1² Vespasian 301). The image of clasped right hands (again accompanied by *Fides Publica* SC as well as the image of a poppy and two corn ears) appeared again, in Rome, in AD 72 on the reverse of an as (RIC II.1² Vespasian 402; also with only corn ears, RIC II.1² Vespasian 444). Also, sestertii were minted in Rome in AD 72 depicting Titus on the obverse and *Fides*

Publica SC on the reverse accompanied by hands clasped over a caduceus and corn ears (RIC II.1² Vespasian 482); also an as RIC II.1² Vespasian 507). The numismatic evidence from the mints at Rome thus indicates a preference for the image of clasped right hands accompanied by the legend *Fides Publ[ica]* at the start of Vespasian's reign. For his help and advice in relation to all the coins discussed here, I am indebted to Professor Ted Buttrey.

- 2 Coins displaying the legend *Fides Exercituum* SC on the reverse were minted only by Vespasian, in Rome, in AD 71 with the image of clasped hands over the image of an *aquila* on a prow (RIC II.1² Vespasian 70–2, 156, 229).
- 3 The circumstantial evidence in favour of viewing a correlation between Flavian imperial policy and coinage is compelling, especially in the case of Domitian. The case put forward by Carradice and Buttrey 2007 can be summarized thus: (1) There is similarity between some coin types of Vespasian with those of Augustus in cases where we know, independently, that Vespasian was emphasizing these same political ideas. (2) The coins struck by Titus under the rule of Vespasian generally follow his types, since he was effectively (though not in title), co-emperor, while the types of Domitian are clearly separate. (3) The numismatic evidence available reveals the care taken in choosing legends on Flavian coins. All show a careful, chronological pattern that follows the development of the Flavians' titles. (4) Once Domitian became Caesar, four different types of Minerva appear in circulation, which virtually take over all of Domitian's gold and silver coinage. Domitian's adoption of Minerva as his patron deity is well documented (see, e.g., Galimberti 2016: 100).
- 4 See, e.g., Hardie 1993.
- 5 Vespasian issued an extensive range of coins depicting Pax (see Carradice and Buttrey 2007: *Pax*). Pax was less popular as a theme on the coinage of Titus and Domitian.
- 6 Domitian, following Augustus' revival of the Secular Games in 17 BC, held his own Secular Games in AD 88, changing the date – which should have been 93 – “perhaps because this was a period of severe setbacks for him” (Newlands 2002: 251). Certainly, this period of time coincides closely with the revolt of Saturninus (see below in this chapter). On changing the date of the games, see also Jones 1992a: 102–3, and on Domitian's manipulation of the calendar, see, for example, Newlands 2003: 505: “This manipulation of the Calendar was a skill Domitian had undoubtedly learned from Augustus.”
- 7 The association between *Fides* and the bond of good faith sealed with right hands was well established in Roman culture; see, for example, the New Pauly-Wissowa 2006–11 s.v. *Fides*.
- 8 It is worth noting, however, that the image of corn ears, poppies, and fruit, which accompany many of the Flavian coins depicting *Fides* and/or *Concordia* do feature in Augustan iconography, such as on the *Ara Pacis*, and so could be

viewed as a symbol of the *Pax Augusta* (cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.704: *Pax Cererem nutrit; Pacis alumna Ceres*, “Pax nourishes Ceres, Ceres is the ward of Peace”).

- 9 Augustan poets, however, do allude to the prominence of Fides. In the *Carmen Saeculare*, for example, Horace states (57–60) that the deities Fides, Pax, Honos, Pudor, and Virtus have returned to Rome under Augustus. This is a theme repeated in the *Aeneid*, where Jupiter prophesizes that Fides, Vesta, and Quirinus – together with Remus – will give laws for Rome following the end of the war and Augustus’ return to the city (*aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis / cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus / iura dabunt*, “then with wars put aside the harsh ages will soften, white-haired Fides and Vesta, Quirinus with his brother Remus will give the laws,” A. 1.291–3). The idea that Romulus and Remus should be working together to provide Rome’s laws hints at the civil conflict between Antony and Octavian, later resolved, that took place prior to Augustus’ assumption of the principate (with the exception being, of course, that the dead Antony had no place in Augustus’ new-look Rome). Du Quesnay 1995: 167–8 writes that the temple of Honos and Virtus had received attention from Augustus when the *Ara Fortuna Reducis* was erected in 19 BC and that the altar to Pax Augusta was “constituted” in 13 BC. He hypothesizes (using a passage from *Prop.* 4.4) that the temples or cults of Fides and Pudicitia may also have received attention around this time.
- 10 Despite the prominence of Pax under Augustus, she scarcely featured on his coinage. We have only one (possible) example from the mint in Rome (*RIC* I² Augustus 252), although there was a large issue of silver *Cistophori* at Ephesus around 28–20 BC, which depicted Pax, standing and holding a caduceus. As with Fides, Pax then falls out of favour under the Julio-Claudians with respect to their coinage, but makes a resurgent appearance on coins from the civil war of AD 68–9.
- 11 See, e.g., Tuck 2016: 118.
- 12 In the coinage that Octavian produced prior to 29 BC, the emphasis is placed upon him as the son of the divine Julius Caesar (e.g., *RRC* 534.1–3), as the favourite of Venus (e.g., *RIC* I² Augustus 250a), and as a victor (e.g., *RIC* I² Augustus 254a). Sutherland and Carson 1984: 31 write that, “after 29 we see the results of victory in the trophy, the ceremonial rostral column celebrating the capture of Antony’s ships, the city-foundation, the adornment of temples, the return of civilian rule, honours to Mars, Apollo, and Diana, and finally the ceremonial honours of January 27 BC.”
- 13 There are, however, coins from the reign of Claudius that depict the emperor shaking hands with the praetorians shortly after his accession (*RIC* I² Claudius 11, an aureus minted in Rome between AD 41 and 42 depicting the head of Claudius on the obverse and on the reverse an image of Claudius, bareheaded and togate, shaking hands with a soldier holding a shield and aquila; the legend

reads *Praetor Recept*). Such coins demonstrate that straightforward succession, even for the Julio-Claudians – especially one who, so the sources tell us (e.g., Suet. *Claud.* 4.7, 6.2), was never intended to rule – was far from guaranteed. Public displays of such concord, therefore, were likely to have been minted to emphasize that Claudius had received the support of Rome’s elite fighting force and to affirm the stability of his regime. It is perhaps no coincidence that Suetonius accuses Claudius as being “the first of the Caesars who had secured the pledged loyalty (*fides*) of the soldiery by means of a bribe” (*primus Caesarum fidem militis etiam praemio pigneratus*, 10.4).

- 14 Of the coins from Vitellius’ reign, Sutherland and Carson 1984: 264 write that “the types employed look primarily to the loyalties of the armed forces.” The legend *Fides Praetorianorum* accompanied by the image of clasped right hands also appears on coins from Vitellius’ reign (*RIC* I.² Vitellius 47). Other examples of *fides* on coinage prior to AD 71 (when we have the first examples of *fides* coins minted by Vespasian in Rome, see note 1 above) include a denarius with *Fides* on the reverse and an image of clasped hands holding a standard surmounted by a small boar and a caduceus, from the Gallic revolt of AD 69–70 (*RIC* I.² Civil Wars 132). Sutherland and Carson 1984: 201, in reference to the military coins of the civil war, write: “[V]iewed as a whole, the coins of this group are very strongly military in their message, with particular emphasis upon the *Fides Exercituum* and the *Fides* and the *Concordia Praetorianorum* (nos. 118–22, 126): the essence of this pairing of concepts seems to be an appeal for unified loyalty to the ‘armies’ (unspecified) and the praetorian cohorts in Rome.”
- 15 Motifs of civil war are present throughout Augustan poetry. For a recent discussion of civil war in Augustan poetry, see, for example, the chapters by Giusti, Rebeggiani, and Labate in Hardie 2016.
- 16 Theseus is called *perfide* twice by Ariadne in Catullus 64 (132–3). On the influence of these lines on Virgil’s Dido, see Nappa 2010: 384–5.
- 17 For Virgil, I use Mynors 1969; for Ovid, Tarrant 2004; for Lucan, Duff 1928; for Martial, Shackleton Bailey 1993; for Silius, Delz 1987; for Statius, Shackleton Bailey 2003. All translations are my own.
- 18 Dido defines her relationship with Aeneas in terms of *fides* throughout Book 4. At the start of the book, she tells her sister Anna that her *fides* (in Aeneas) is not in vain (*nec vana fides*, 4.12). Later, following his betrayal, she says that “nowhere is *fides* safe” (*nusquam tuta fides*, 4.552).
- 19 *Infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangent? / tum decuit, cum sceptras dabas. En dextra fidesque / quem secum patrios aiunt portare Penates / quem subiisse umeris confectum aetate parentem!* (“Unlucky Dido, now do your impious actions touch you? Then it seemed right, when you gave away your scepter. Look at the right hand and good-faith of he whom they say carried with him his

forefathers' gods, whom they say carried on his shoulders his father worn-out with age!" 4.596–9).

- 20 Ironically, when Aeneas meets Dido in the underworld in Book 6, he swears by whatever *fides* there is below that he left her unwillingly: *per sidera iuro / per superos, et si qua fides tellure sub ima est / inuitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi* ("By the stars I swear, by the world above, and whatever is sacred in the grave below, unwillingly, queen, I parted from your shores," 6.458–60).
- 21 Murgatroyd 2005: 265, in reference to *Fast.* 3.473, repeats Conte's observation that the echoes of Catullus' Ariadne with the cry of *perfide*, combined with the word *memini* ("I remember") "signals literary memory of her grief as Catullus' Ariadne," but adds that she is conflating her identity here in the *Fasti* with that in the *Heroides* and that, in failing to "remember" the words of her Catullan counterpart correctly, "there is a joke in *memini*, as her memory is plainly at fault."
- 22 Faulkerson 2005: 33 observes that "Theseus is traditionally addressed as *perfide*" and that "the transference of this epithet to Demophoon suggests that Phyllis may not be able to distinguish between the two men."
- 23 Cole 2008: 106–7 perceives this scene in the *Metamorphoses* as one of change – where women finally begin to overcome their passivity when raped (or otherwise abused) by men. Cole refers to this as "the rhetoric of protest" and notes that, even though Tereus initially silences Philomela by cutting out her tongue, this protest continues with the Tapestry that she then weaves and the subsequent revenge that she will take with her sister Procne. This cry "of protest" will ultimately lead to an act of kin killing, when Procne and Philomela kill Procne's son Itys (107).
- 24 Fratantuono 2012: 391 notes that "Caesar begins to lie in mendacious words that attempt to support his feigned emotions (9.1062–3). Caesar was the much vaunted practitioner of clemency, and now he asserts that he has lost that opportunity in the matter of Pompey – but Lucan has already warned us that all of this is lies, and the direct implication then is that Pompey would not have been spared."
- 25 On Caesar's display of mercy in his *Bellum Gallicum* and *Bellum Civile*, see Grillo 2012: 78–105.
- 26 Augustus claimed in the *Res Gestae* (3.1–2) to have shown mercy both to citizens (with the exception of his "father's" killers, 2) and conquered foreign foes. Dowling 2006: 164 writes that "it is as though he had come to see clemency as the defining characteristic of victory. Conquest itself was not sufficient; the truly successful general was defined by his ability and inclination to grant clemency to the conquered." The display of mercy, *clementia*, became a feature of *principes* thereafter, even if those emperors themselves would later be remembered as tyrannical. Nero, if we can believe Suetonius, at the prompting of his tutor Seneca, made public proclamations on his intention to

show mercy (*Nero* 10). In addition, the poet Martial portrayed Mercy as being a characteristic of Domitian's rule. See below in this chapter.

- 27 Vessey 1973: 191, on Amphiaras' renaming Opheltes "Archemorus," notes "Amphiaras is under no illusions: all is merely an interlude, for the new name of the child is itself a sign of what must come to pass."
- 28 *vivisne an adhuc manet ira superstes, / perfide, nec sedes umquam meriture quietas* ("Do you live? Or does your anger still remain surviving you, treacherous one, who will never earn a place of rest?" 11.568–9); see also Augoustakis in this volume. The fact that there can be no winners in civil war is emphasized not only by the shared death of the twins, but by the fact that, as Vessey 1973: 278 has noted, "at the end, Polynices in his callous and vindictive words reveals that he is no less evil than his brother."
- 29 Although Scipio accuses the Trebia of turning on its own citizens, the scene echoes Achilles' challenge to the Scamander in Homer's *Iliad* 21, so casting Scipio in the role of an external foe in his own homeland, a role that is affirmed by the Trebia in its response when it effectively compares the Roman to Hannibal (see Stocks 2014: 118). Nevertheless, Scipio is called *inimicus* (4.663) – a personal enemy – rather than *hostis*.
- 30 Augoustakis 2010: 177–8 notes these strong Virgilian echoes and writes that the word "*foedera* (6.517) alludes both to the private and public responsibilities of the Roman General and also alludes to Marcia's first speech, where she refers to their *foedera taeda*, their contract of marriage" (177).
- 31 Perfidy within a domestic context (albeit one that maintains its political connotations) is evident within Flavian literature, such as the *Octavia* of pseudo-Seneca, where Agrippina betrays her husband Claudius (see Ginsberg in this volume). The perfidious wife (*perfida coniunx*) is also evident in Statius' *Thebaid*, where the faithless Eriphyle is juxtaposed with the faithful Argia (see Keith in this volume).
- 32 Williams 2004: 237–8 notes that the address to the lion is reminiscent of earlier apostrophes to the hare in the lion-hare cycle of Book 1 (e.g., 1.22). He adds that "however formal the device may be, a certain anthropomorphism lurks in such addresses to animals; in this case the notion is that animals can and should behave according to human ideals." This anthropomorphism reinforces the civil-war tension that, I argue, lurks within this poem.
- 33 On the dating of this revolt, and Martial's Poem, see Sullivan 1991: 34, who argues for early AD 88 or late 87; Soldevila 2006: 1 and 158, who goes with a date of late 88 or early 89; and Jones 1996: *ad* Suet. *Dom.* 6.2, who dates it to January 89. Jones adds that this revolt was clearly significant, since Suetonius also refers to Tit at 7.3 and 10.5.
- 34 See Soldevila 2006: 158, who writes that Domitian is portrayed as a new Augustus in this poem.

- 35 When Octavian/Augustus goes to war against Antony and Cleopatra in the *Aeneid*, Virgil describes him going into battle supported by Rome's people, senate, and gods (*hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar / cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis*, "here was Augustus Caesar leading the Italians into battle together with the senators, the people, the penates and the great gods," A. 8.678–9). Such a description turns the rhetoric of this battle from a conflict between individuals for mastery of the empire into a conflict of nations, with Octavian/Augustus serving as the "republican" hero for Rome. Augustus' desire to present himself as the restorer of Rome's republic is evident in his *Res Gestae* (e.g., 8; and see, e.g., Luke 2014: 229–30).
- 36 Sullivan 1991: 34 also draws attention to the double nature of this war, which was both civil and "foreign," when he says that "it was described in the senatorial authorities as a 'civil war' and in the inscriptions as 'the German War.'"
- 37 When Titus became *princeps* in AD 79, he minted a coin at Rome, an as, with *Fides Publica S C* on the reverse accompanied by the image of right hands clasped over a caduceus with corn ears (RIC II.1² Titus 224). A similar coin, also an as, was minted at Rome by Titus in AD 80–1, with the Divine Vespasian on the obverse (RIC II.1² Titus 382). Elkins 2017: 42, writes that the cornucopia "symbolized commercial and agricultural prosperity."
- 38 That Domitian took an active interest in the mint is clear from his overhaul of it in AD 82, which was apparently an attempt to improve the quality of the issues and to bring them in line with those produced under Augustus. See Carradice and Buttrey 2007: 243.
- 39 The following Domitian coins, minted in Rome, show Domitian on the obverse and Fides standing on the reverse with corn ears and a plate of fruit, with the legend *Fidei Publicae S C*: dupondii, AD 84 (RIC II.1² Domitian 214–15); dupondii, AD 85 (RIC II.1² 288–9); dupondii, AD 85 (second issue) (RIC II.1² 368–9); asses AD 85 (second issue) (RIC II.1² 378–9); dupondii AD 85 (third issue) (RIC II.1² 407); asses AD 85 (third issue) (RIC II.1² 413–14); dupondii AD 86 (RIC II.1² 478); asses AD 86 (RIC II.1² 486); dupondii AD 87 (RIC II.1² 533–4); asses AD 87 (RIC II.1² 542–3); dupondii AD 88–89 (RIC II.1² 642); asses AD 88–89 (RIC II.1² 647).
- 40 Elkins 2017: 42–3, in reference to RRC 450.2, says that it "signified Caesar's rhetoric of reconciliation and *concordia* in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey."
- 41 Elkins 2017: 43 refers to another coin issue, *quinarii* from 39 BC (RRC 529.4a and 4b), which were struck by the mint and travelled with Octavian. They displayed the head of Concordia on the obverse and clasped right hands over a winged caduceus on the reverse. This coin displayed both the name of Octavian and Antony, and so, Elkins argues, "suggested peace and harmony between Antony and Octavian Caesar."

- 42 Sutherland and Carson 1984: 30 write in reference to the coins Octavian/Augustus produced after Actium: “The later ‘Imp. Caesar’ series, with frequent allusions to the victory at Actium and the fruits of that victory, and more abundant than the ‘Caesar divi f.’ series, was required urgently in Italy, where Octavian had to demobilize and settle great numbers of soldiers – Antonian as well as his own.” On the Julio-Claudians propensity for depicting civil war as foreign war, see also Buckley in this volume.
- 43 Domitian assumed the title Germanicus in late AD 83 / early 84, and it appeared prominently on his coinage thereafter. On Domitian’s wars with the Chatti and his assumption of the title Germanicus, see Southern 1997, chap. 8.
- 44 In the immediate aftermath of the fall of Domitian, the emperor Nerva issued coins depicting the legend *Concordia Exercituum* (RIC II Nerva 2–3, 14–15, 26–7, 53–5, 69, 70, 79–81). Elkins 2017: 39–44 offers an overview of scholarly responses to this issue, which includes the observation that Nerva, by this coin, was appealing for military loyalty. If we can interpret the issue of this coin as an appeal to loyalty that hints at an unstable regime, then it may support the argument that Domitian wished to avoid any such show of “reconciliation” with military leaders at the end of his reign. Emperors after Nerva who use *Fides* on their coinage include the emperor Hadrian (see Bartera in this volume). The “Gallic Emperor” Domitian, perhaps looking back to his namesake, issued coins with the legend *Concordia Militum* (see especially Morgan 2006: 181, who notes that one might expect this Domitian to have produced coins with clasped right hands and a legend *Fides Militum*: “[the fact that he does not] is very suggestive of the centrality of the military to Domitianus’ thinking and strategy that it is *concordia militum*, according to the symbolism of the reverse, that will bring about universal peace”).
- 45 For a detailed reading of the appearance of the goddess *Fides* at Saguntum in the *Punica*, as well as her role within Roman society, see the chapters by Fucecchi and Marks in this volume.

The *Fides* of Flavius Josephus

STEVE MASON

Everyone knows two things about Flavius Josephus (AD 37–ca. 100). First, “the Jewish historian” – a post he occupies by acclamation – is our principal source for southern Syria under early Roman rule. He wrote his *Judaean War* in seven volumes during Vespasian’s reign, then the twenty-volume *Judaean Antiquities* (Ἀρχαιολογία), running from Creation to the eve of the war and supplemented by an autobiographical appendix, as Domitian’s reign neared its end (AD 93–4). A two-volume polemical essay on the Judaeans’ antiquity and enviable laws, known as *Against Apion*, completes the surviving oeuvre.

The second thing everyone knows is that Josephus was a client of the Flavians, brought to Rome as a human trophy from their *virtus*-defining victory in Judaea. Near the end of his life, he boasts of having accompanied a respectful Titus on the journey from Alexandria to Rome (V 422), of his privileged access to the Flavians’ field notes when composing his *War* (V 342), and of benefactions from each successive Flavian ruler (V 413–29). He buttresses his credentials with the claim that he presented copies of the *War* to Vespasian and Titus (V 361; *Ap.* 1.50), whereupon Titus declared them the only reliable guide to the conflict (V 363). Josephus settles a dispute with a literary rival by citing the judgment of Vespasian, who protected him and condemned the other fellow (V 336–67). In the *Antiquities*, he recalls witnessing a display of Solomonic demon-therapy by a Judaeon in Rome, in the presence of all three Flavians with their top military commanders (*AJ* 8.46) – incidental evidence of the ongoing relationship.

Suetonius (*Vesp.* 5.6) and the *Epitome* of Cassius Dio (65/66.1.4) both mention Josephus by name. Tacitus may have borrowed from his *War* (in *Hist.* 5.12–13) and/or mentioned him in his own lost account of Jerusalem’s

fall. Within decades, at any rate, Josephus' writings had become the sole authority on matters Judaeian.¹

Such a career outline makes this extraordinary easterner an intriguing case study of Flavian *fides*. Since Josephus wrote in Greek, the word *fides* itself cannot be the focus of our discussion, and he exploits the parallel word-group πίστις/πιστός/πιστεύω too often and mundanely for this precise language to be worth pursuing.² In the scale of possible contexts for Roman *fides*, however, from Augustus' boast that many peoples (*gentes*, ἔθνη) experienced the good faith (*fides*, πίστις) of the Roman people under his leadership (*Res Gestae* 32.6) to the various dimensions of "mutual loyalty" in the Flavian circle, we have ample room in Josephus' thirty volumes for exploration. Several studies have examined Josephus' view of the Roman Empire in a conceptual way,³ and my recent *History of the Jewish War* looks in detail at the relationship of *fides* between Rome and Jerusalem, as Josephus presents it and in reality.⁴ The present investigation takes up more personal dimensions of *fides* in Josephus' literary portraits of the Flavians. Its underlying questions are: How does he present Vespasian and Titus? What was there about his writing that merited their support or at least tolerance? And what might Josephus' portraiture say about the governing style and expectations of Vespasian and Titus, in relation to writers who were on the margins of their circle?

We may sharpen these questions with four preliminary considerations. First, in the *War's* programmatic opening sentence, Josephus denounces contemporary historians of the war who fawn over the current rulers (*BJ* 1.1–8). Right off the mark, he tries to establish a niche as the only credible guide to the Flavians' founding achievement. With the unique knowledge of a Judaeian leader who personally faced Vespasian in battle, he will not further aggrandize the victors, no matter how powerful they may be. His task is that of the dignified statesman-historian: to set the record straight with a balanced account (1.9). Confronting regime flatterers is a bold and exciting gambit: What will he say? The reader can manage this program only while maintaining *fides* with Vespasian and Titus.

Second, "the Jewish historian" Josephus has understandably been read mainly for information on Judaea, seldom as a Roman author. Scholars accept as a circumstantial datum that he wrote in Flavian Rome, and in Greek, but he has rarely been included in surveys or syntheses of Greek, Roman, or Flavian literature.⁵ John Marincola's *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* tore down that fence in principle,⁶ but in the intervening years Josephus has been returned to the bench for the big games. Flavian specialists increasingly acknowledge that he should not be neglected – and hope someone is taking care of that.⁷ Reading his works as compositions

from Flavian Rome remains rare. But doing so forces us to consider their implications for his *fides*-relationship with the rulers.

Third, to the extent that ancient historians have commented on Josephus' relationship to the ruling family, they have mainly characterized it as the sort of mindless adulation one would *a priori* expect of someone in his position – rather dull, unless one is interested in sycophancy.⁸ A common schema, often taken to be self-evident, imagines Josephus as originally a determined rebel fighter in Judaea who, after an ignoble surrender, became eager to honour his saviours. He thus wrote the *Judaean War* in the service of Vespasian and Titus, possibly using an official Flavian chronicle as a main source.⁹ As Josephus matured, or became alienated from Domitian, he recovered his self-respect. Finally abandoning agitprop, he devoted his later writings to the antiquity and noble character of his people, leaving these works of quiet repentance as another part of his legacy. Nowadays, those who assume such a trajectory do not normally show the easy contempt of First World War-era critics for a renegade or turncoat,¹⁰ but they still convey bemusement at Josephus' allegedly abrupt shifts of allegiance.¹¹

Fourth, although this image of Josephus' *War* as the writing of a Flavian apparatchik remains alive and well among non-specialists,¹² specialist research in Josephus tends now to stress the independent Judaeans interests of all his writings, their unity as a corpus, and their significant departures from Flavian myth.¹³ The present chapter contributes to this trajectory in scholarship. It is not wholly original, but the literary portraits of the Titi Flavii in his *War* have not yet been isolated for study.¹⁴ So this is our task: to track and interpret the threads directly pertaining to Vespasian and Titus in Josephus' *Judaean War*.

Preliminaries

Before we proceed, it will be helpful to mention some facts about Josephus' *War* that may not be widely known, to clear the ground and discard mistaken assumptions.

First, the *Judaean War* is not about the Flavians.¹⁵ They take their places in the train of Roman strongmen that provides background scenery throughout the work's 250-year journey (ca. 170 BC–AD 75), but the story does not revolve around the Flavians any more than it does around Pompey, Antony, or Augustus in the earlier parts. The work's opening prospectus (1.19–29) anticipates this parade of great Romans without giving special attention to the Flavians. The two first and longest volumes use Pompey, Crassus, Caesar, Antony, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius (whose accession depends on Herod's grandson), and Nero, along with their legates and

officials, as background for the main story: Jerusalem under Hasmoneans, King Herod, and their descendants.

The work is nearly half over, therefore, before Vespasian and Titus appear.¹⁶ Nero sends Vespasian to take over from his failed legate in Syria, C. Cestius Gallus, the main Roman official in the final quarter of Book 2, who was planning to march on Jerusalem in the spring of AD 67. This is how Vespasian becomes a key player in Book 3. But his prominence there is because he is the adversary of the *War's* producer, director, scriptwriter, and leading man: Josephus. No one in Flavian Rome doubts the emperor's magnificence, or the legions' abilities. Josephus does not need to make that case here, when Vespasian is emperor. Instead he exploits the Flavians' reputations to highlight his own achievements and character. As a thirty-year-old priest with no visible means of support, he nevertheless managed to frustrate and demoralize Vespasian, Titus, and their 60,000-strong army. The famous conclusion of this conflict, in Josephus' surrender, is likewise about Josephus' divine mission and proximity to the Deity, not about Vespasian's virtues (3.351–4). Vespasian returns in the latter half of Book 4, to consolidate the Judaeen countryside and be acclaimed *imperator* in Caesarea, before leaving Josephus' narrative world for Rome.

Titus takes up the baton in Books 5 and 6, but the work is not about him either. Its driving tragic score concerns besieged Jerusalem, its temple, tyrants, and terrors. Titus' presence adds valuable texture and pathos, but Josephus says much more about the people in Jerusalem, their actions and their mind-sets. In Book 7, Domitian makes a diverting appearance, in the west (7.85–8), and Titus figures in a few eastern episodes before he leaves the region for Rome (7.121–62). That leaves the senatorial legates of the new imperial province – Cerialis, Bassus, and Silva (AD 70–4) – to conclude the train of Roman commanders (to 7.455). As the preface makes clear (1.11–12), then, this is a story of Judaea and its beating heart, Jerusalem, their long prosperity under Rome, and their sudden catastrophe at the end of Nero's reign. Roman leaders provide necessary context, but it is not a Roman, much less a Flavian, story.

Second, Josephus' overall account of Jerusalem's life clashes with Flavian media presentations at several points. To take only the most glaring discrepancy: the Flavians' founding myth depended on the claim that they had conquered a foreign people. Hence the triumph, the senate's permission to extend Rome's *pomerium*, the revived Augustan themes of eastern conquest, the abundant *Iudaea Capta* coins (recalling *Aegypto Capta* and *Armenia Capta*), the inscription on the arch in the Circus Maximus extolling Titus for an unprecedented *conquest*, and Silius Italicus' *ex eventu* prediction that Titus would tame the fierce tribes of Palestine.¹⁷

Scholars dismiss all this as political piffle but rarely notice that Josephus' *War* itself plainly exposes the sham. It begins its account of Judaeo-Roman

relations with Hasmonean treaties of friendship a century before Pompey (1.38, 48). It then dwells on Pompey's capture of Jerusalem for Rome (64/63 BC) and the repeat event, not thirty years later, by Antony's general Sosius, after a spell of Parthian control (1.127–58, 327–57). In this account, it is worth noting, Jerusalem's real conqueror, Pompey, piously resists the allure of the temple treasures – unlike the Flavians, who will bring them to Rome as the triumph's main attraction. The rest of the *War* is an unbroken story of Judaeo-Roman cooperation, elaborating Josephus' programmatic claim that Jerusalem had attained the height of prosperity under Rome, before this last reversal (1.11). So any notion that Vespasian and Titus conquered Jerusalem is rendered absurd. When the Flavians arrive, it is to clean up the mess that Nero's legate in Syria had failed to manage in his province (3.1–5).

I leave aside here the larger question of whether Josephus' description of the Flavians' "war" supports the representation of the conflict in their triumph, as he describes it (7.122–57) – or whether he describes their triumph in order to drive home the contrast with his authoritative account in volumes 3 to 6.¹⁸ In any case, what does his programmatic departure from central Flavian themes imply for his relationship of *fides* with the rulers?

Third, Josephus' *War* says almost nothing about the author's dealings with the imperial family after the conflict (7.448). He describes these relations much more fully in writings composed near or after Domitian's death in 96 (V 359–63, 414–29; cf. *Ap.* 1.50). It is inconvenient for the "sycophantic *War*" scheme that Josephus became unambiguously complimentary toward Vespasian and Titus when they were long dead. Indeed, he apparently contemplated writing another work, which would cover aspects of Titus' reign (*AJ* 20.144), and we have no reason to think that it would have been less laudatory than all the later remarks. But if Josephus turned so complimentary in these later writings, which are universally recognized as nationalist in sentiment, there is no reason to doubt that the earlier *War*, which portrays the two men in more ambiguous terms, was already written from the nationalist motives that Josephus forcefully declares in the *War's* preface (1.1–8). There is no reason to imagine an abrupt change of loyalties between the *War* and the later compositions.

I hope to have sufficiently disturbed any complacent assumptions about Josephus' *War* that we may now look afresh at the work's actual portraits of the Flavians.

Vespasian

The *War's* characterizations of Vespasian fall in four blocks: the Roman's campaign in Galilee and the Golan in AD 67, first as Josephus' enemy and then as his captor; Vespasian's domination of Judaea and Peraea in 68–9; his bid for power and release of Josephus in 69; and the Flavian triumph of 71.

Although Josephus' Vespaian material is broken up in these sections, his overall portrait has coherent elements.

Josephus does not expect his Roman audience to learn about Vespaian from his accounts, of course. He exploits what everybody knows about the emperor to bring his story to life. Common impressions of Vespaian have left enough traces in Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, Suetonius, Xiphilinus' *Epitome* of Cassius Dio, and Flavian coinage and monuments for a decent sketch. In marked contrast to recent imperial predecessors, the new man was known to be a tough, experienced, and dominating field commander who had faced enemies eye to eye. He was also shrewd, worldly wise, and cunning in politics. Even the avowedly non-partisan Tacitus can say, long after the emperor's death: "Vespaian was a keen soldier who would march at the front, select the camp site, and whether it was night or day throw his skill against the enemy, or indeed, if the situation called for it, his own arm" (*Vespaianus acer militiae anteire agmen, locum castris capere, noctu diuque consilio ac, si res posceret, manu hostibus obniti*; Tac. *Hist.* 2.5; cf. 2.82; Agr. 13, 17; Suet. *Vesp.* 4). He was a soldier's soldier, candid and free of affectation, with no patience for humbug in others. He reportedly satirized his triumph and joked about the deification awaiting him at death.¹⁹ Suetonius relates that, as a member of Nero's Greek entourage, before his dispatch to Syria, he had repeatedly fallen asleep or walked out while the young ruler was performing (*Vesp.* 4.4). The same author dwells on Vespaian's earthy wit, which he sometimes deployed to deflect criticism of his unseemly taste for money (*Vesp.* 16–23).

Josephus' Vespaian comes to life against this background. His unique military experience justifies Nero's choice of him – the *War* ignores doomed Corbulo – to take over the Judaeian portfolio (*BJ* 3.3–5). Josephus paints an imposing picture of the redoubtable commander, at the head of 60,000 soldiers. He intensifies his colours with a digression on legionary training, which insists that Rome's army simply cannot be beaten, by foes or by natural adversity (3.64–108, 115–26). In this way, Josephus makes vivid his own hopeless plight as the one assigned to protect Galilee from Vespaian's mighty force (3.69).²⁰ The reader feels Josephus' terror. Although he absurdly claims to have trained 100,000 men in column manoeuvres, of whom 60,000 completed his tough course (2.576–83), it turns out not to matter. His fighters vanish once the region's capital Sepphoris – "sentinel of the whole *ethnos*" – having sent delegates to welcome Vespaian, admits a 7,000-strong garrison, which quickly dominates the Galilean countryside (3.34, 59–63, 129–31).

It is understandable that Josephus, writing in Rome, milks his personal conflict with Vespaian for his own image construction. Who else could claim such experience? His aim is not to praise the Flavian ruler but to

display his own mettle as he had to face the world's greatest commander and army. Disarmingly, Josephus admits to having immediately fled for his life on the Roman's arrival – to King Agrippa's lakeside city Tiberias, which was apparently not on Vespasian's itinerary (3.131). But a sense of duty to the central Galilean town of Iotapata, which found itself suddenly imperilled by the arrogance of Vespasian's general Placidus (3.310–14), arouses Josephus to rush to the aid of friends there (3.141–3). In historical reality, he may have gone to Iotapata hoping that his aristocratic status and linguistic competence – he had already undertaken an embassy to Nero's Rome (V 13–16) – would enable him to negotiate terms with the Roman commander. In the narrative, when his ploys to buy time are exhausted, he again tries to flee rather than die pointlessly with the locals (3.193–206, 343).

When the people of Iotapata prevent his departure, flattering him as their only hope, Josephus has no choice but to embrace the role of their general. He instantly morphs into a Caesar-like tactician, and thus manages to create the biggest problems Vespasian will face in the region (3.155–61). Josephus' defensive genius thwarts Vespasian at every turn, dragging out the siege for well over a month. Each commander, now facing a worthy opponent, strains to adapt to the other's manoeuvres. Josephus, for his part, orders bold forays into the Roman camp and against the siege engines, massively strengthens his defensive walls, and pours scalding oil on advancing legionaries, a chemical weapon that burns under their armour, followed by boiled fenugreek to turn the ramps beneath them into lethal slides. He is even more adept at psychological operations: drenching cloths in water to feign abundance of provisions or hanging bags of chaff to absorb the blows of Roman rams (3.276–81).

Indeed each book of the *War* dwells on the psychological dimensions of each conflict. At Iotapata, in spite of the Romans' overwhelming numbers and material advantages, Josephus' narrative balances the terror they predictably create with the anxiety, despair, and sometimes panic on their own side.²¹ At one point, his generalship nearly throws the whole Roman force into disarray, when one of his archers manages to hit Vespasian's foot:²²

μέγιστον δὲ θόρυβον ἐνεποίησεν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις· πρὸς γὰρ τὸ αἷμα ταραχθέντων τῶν πλησίων φήμη διὰ παντὸς ἐπήει τοῦ στρατοῦ, καὶ τῆς πολιορκίας οἱ πλείους ἀφέμενοι μετ' ἐκπλήξεως καὶ δέους ἐπὶ τὸν στρατηγὸν συνέθεον (*BJ* 3.236–7)²³

This caused a huge commotion among the Romans. When those nearby became disturbed at the blood, rumour immediately spread through the whole army. Most abandoned the siege and came running, in panic and alarm for their general.

Young Titus' distress for his father (δείσας, ἀγωνία) compounds this general consternation. The tough old commander himself shrugs off the

injury and soon restores order, in accord with his character, but Josephus adds no adulation. The brighter beacon is his own generalship, which compels Vespasian to endure a dispiriting siege outside a town he had expected to roll over.

Josephus' famous account of his eventual surrender at Iotapata (3.340–408) has many fascinating dimensions, which again serve mainly to illuminate his command brilliance, oratorical skills, cool resourcefulness, and proximity to God. Vespasian is not his focus, though he is ours here.

In connection with the surrender episode, I would point out something generally missed: that Josephus portrays the enemy general-become-*princeps* as a serial liar, or at least a dissembler. Not that there is anything necessarily wrong with that. Frontinus' *Stratagems* assume that deception is basic to military success, and Josephus' autobiography is a stew of stratagems, beginning with the pretences of the Jerusalem elite, including himself, when dealing with the people (V 21–2, 126–8, 141–4, 226). Even pledges of security or safe conduct are a grey area. Josephus expresses outrage when militants in Jerusalem pledge safety to the auxiliary garrison, only to cut the men down after they relinquish their weapons (BJ 2.450–4). But many episodes show that promises of safe passage were always suspect. He is too canny to accept a domestic enemy's pledge, assuming that is a ruse (V 216–27). And he cheerfully describes how he himself invited local enemies into his house, assuring their safety, then flayed them to the bone or, in a different version, sent one man back with a severed hand dangling from his neck (BJ 2.611–13; V 147–9). Deception is part of effective leadership.

If one can find a consistent ethic here, perhaps the principle (as with rhetoric) is that a virtuous end justifies the means. Bad men revel in deceit for its own sake, whereas good men may be forced to use it for their noble purposes. Even still, when Vespasian is the deceiver and Josephus the intended victim, it is hard to see his portrait as adulatory of the Roman. We wonder, again, about the nature of Josephus' literary *fides* and the limits of Vespasian's tolerance.

When Iotapata finally falls, the story goes, Vespasian wants his troublesome enemy in hand, but Josephus has found a deep cave in which to hide. Vespasian sends two tribunes, instructing them "to offer him a pledge of safety and persuade him to come up" (3.340–4). Assuming that the pledge is an excuse to kill him, Josephus is "not at all persuaded" (3.345–6). Vespasian tries again, this time using a tribune named Nicanor, who is somehow known to Josephus. This fellow piles it on, rhapsodizing about the clemency of the Romans, insisting that Josephus' valour has made him an object of admiration and promising that Vespasian could never conceive of harming

him. *Au contraire*, his sole desire is to “save such a brave man.” Any suspicion that Nicanor was allowing himself to be used for dishonourable purposes would be an insult to the interlocutor (3.346–9).

Josephus does not believe even this cloying appeal. And right he is, too. For when he finally enters the Roman camp beside Nicanor – this after divine assurances of protection and mission, *not* because he trusts Vespasian (3.350–4) – his life is in immediate peril. Vespasian is nowhere to be seen, and the Roman soldiers plan to string him up. Only the visual impact that the thirty-year-old Judean makes on some commanders, fortunately including the sensitive twenty-seven-year-old Titus, opens a path to survival. Indeed, “he [Titus] was the main factor in securing his safety from his father” (3.397). Josephus need not spell out that Vespasian has been lying. It is clear that the general never dreamed of sparing Josephus, much less of honouring him as a worthy opponent. Even as he hears Josephus’ prediction of his own imminent rise to power,²⁴ Vespasian dismisses it as the prisoner’s predictable effort to save his life, and orders Josephus kept under close guard. Vespasian and Titus gradually extend courtesies to their prisoner as they discover his potential value, but still Vespasian will not release him until he makes his bid for empire two years later. Only then, as he begins plotting with supporters in Berytus, does he discover the truth – or usefulness – of Josephus’ prediction (3.403–8; 4.620–9).

Vespasian’s particular blend of toughness and trickery continues in the story long after Iotapata. Having quickly pacified Galilee by the beginning of summer in 67, he goes to relax with King Agrippa II in the cool of the royal capital at Panias, below Mount Hermon. There Agrippa requests his help in dealing with the restiveness that has recently been reported in the lakeside cities given to him by Nero a decade earlier. There is no reason to assume anti-Roman motives behind these disturbances, which seem targeted at the king. Nevertheless, as an eager commander and a faithful friend with a huge army now resting, Vespasian quickly agrees and recalls his force to put the fear of God into Tiberias and Taricheae (3.443–61). The former is predictably easy. The leaders of the Greek-style *polis* want no trouble, and the anti-Agrippa faction flees an hour’s walk up the lake to Taricheae (3.457).

There Vespasian’s force quickly isolates the militants and kills anyone willing to fight on land or lake (*BJ* 3.462–531). Josephus adds that many innocent residents were killed by Titus. Although they expected his pledge of security (κατὰ ... ἐλπίδα δεξιᾶς), Titus ordered his men to kill indiscriminately, just to be sure that all militants were destroyed (3.500–2).

When the fighting is over, Vespasian holds a *consilium* with his generals about the remaining foreigners in Taricheae, including many who are old

and unfit. Seemingly by inference only, he decides that they too must have been instigators (κατάρξαι γὰρ οὗτος ἐδόκει πολέμου) and so deserve death (3.532). Vespasian's only quandary is how to get rid of them (τὸν δὲ τρόπον αὐτῶν τῆς ἀναιρέσεως διανοεῖτο, 3.534). If he kills them in cold blood, as they beg for their lives, he will create needless opposition from the townsfolk for an unjust act, whereas he himself could not stomach offering them a pledge of safety and then killing them elsewhere (μετὰ πίστεις ἐπιθέσθαι προελθοῦσιν οὐχ ὑπέμενεν, 3.535).

Josephus thus makes it clear that what is about to happen is deeply unjust, and that Vespasian knows it. But he blames it on Vespasian's friends, who prevail over their commander (ξενίκων δ' οἱ φίλοι, 3.536). The enemy is the Judaeans, they insist, and Vespasian's mandate is to suppress Judaeian trouble. So he has a right to kill them. Moreover – recalling Thucydides – he must “prefer what is advantageous over what is proper” (χρῆναι τὸ συμφέρον αἰρεῖσθαι πρὸ τοῦ πρέποντος), if he cannot have both.

So it happens that Vespasian follows a course he knows to be wrong. He permits the supplicants “a doubtful safe-conduct” (αὐτοῖς ἄδειαν ἀμφίβολον ἐπέτρεψεν). But their walk to freedom will be inside a four-mile security cordon leading back to Tiberias. There, after gathering an alleged 37,000 in the stadium, he kills more than a thousand of the elderly and weak, preserving the rest for slave labour (3.532–42). When we recall that, on other occasions, Vespasian readily overrules his advisors (4.366–76), as a wise commander must, this easy capitulation can hardly be characterized as flattery.

Vespasian concludes his assistance to Agrippa by besieging and overrunning the natural fortress Gamala in the Golan Heights, where the last anti-royal rebels have fled. His legionaries' rapid entry into the steeply layered town proves disastrous, however, as they become trapped near the summit and cannot retreat, their comrades still pushing ahead from the narrow alleys below. The townsfolk take full advantage of Vespasian's difficulties. His soldiers, including key officers, die horrible deaths as they fall through rooftops or absorb rocks hurled from above. Trapped himself, Vespasian barely manages to back out through the breach point (*BJ* 4.17–38). Josephus duly credits Vespasian's personal courage in all this and presents him as blaming the soldiers for *their* impetuosity. But he is in command. The incident does not cover him with glory, and Josephus' tendency to blame others is becoming noticeable (4.39–48). Vespasian wisely delays a further assault until Titus has returned from a trip. The younger man, angered by the earlier debacle, leads a hand-picked small force into the town, which Vespasian backs up in due course, and so the town finally falls (4.70–83).

Vespasian's later activities in southern Syria, consolidating his grip on Judaea and Peraea across the Jordan (from 4.410), enhance Josephus'

developing portrait of an effective commander with a massive army methodically going about his work, but still it is hard to find obvious flattery. His general Placidus, the one responsible for Iotapata's plight earlier, continues his personal glory-hunting: he cuts down terrified and innocent villagers, of all ages and both sexes, until the Jordan River is choked with their corpses (4.430–9). Vespasian's actions west of the Jordan are little different if not as crass: he kills more than 10,000 helpless countryfolk (4.445–8).

Josephus' account of Vespasian's tourist-like visit to the Dead Sea (Asphaltitis) seems likewise more concerned with consistency of character in his narrative than with bolstering any image that Vespasian's enablers might have desired. The lake was already famous for its buoyancy (Plin. *Nat.* 2.26, 5.72). Whereas most people confirm this by simply wading in, Vespasian concocts an experiment more suited to his nature. He "ordered some who did not know how to swim to be tossed in the deep part, with their hands tied behind them" (Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐκέλευσέ τινας τῶν νεῖν οὐκ ἐπισταμένων δεθέντας ὀπίσω τὰς χεῖρας ῥιφῆναι κατὰ τοῦ βυθοῦ, 4.477). Luckily they float, but the test reflects a peculiar mindset, which Josephus neither praises nor criticizes. Vespasian's last engagement before departing the field is in a small town, where "the strong fled, the weak perished, and everything left went up in flames" (4.489) – not exactly epic warfare suited to a hero.

Josephus' account of Vespasian's bid for imperial power is too detailed for discussion here. But it is also more nuanced than one might imagine from his billing as a sycophant. Although Josephus does not openly denigrate the ruler, of course, his lighting choices are not uniformly flattering. To begin with, his account deviates from the cherished Flavian chronology, according to which the Prefect of Egypt independently acclaimed Vespasian emperor on 1 July 69. This became the dynasty's retrospective *dies imperii* – erasing most of Vitellius' principate (Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3). Josephus rewrites the story to serve his own purposes, having Vespasian first acclaimed around Judaea.²⁵ Certainly, Josephus' version does not seem to merit Tacitus' complaint about Flavian-era historians who cravenly reduced Vespasian's grubbier motives to a sublime "concern for peace" and "love of the republic" (*Hist.* 2.101).

Josephus grounds the story in personal conflict. Vespasian detests Vitellius and considers himself more deserving of supreme power (4.586–7, 602). Although he burns with rage and is inwardly tormented, he is too fearful to act because of the distances involved, the alleged winter weather, and the possibility that fortune will turn on him (4.591). He prefers the safety of a private life (4.602). His officers, however, confident of their superiority to Vitellius' men and free of such paralysing doubt, force Vespasian at blade-point to accept his responsibilities (ζῆν ἀξίως, 4.602–4). It is doubtful that this extreme version of the Cincinnatus-like draftee should evoke gushing admiration for the boss.²⁶

Finally, although Josephus' triumph story in Book 7 is all but universally read as the epitome of fealty to the regime, sizeable cracks in the account tell against that interpretation. Confining our focus for present purposes to Vespasian's character, we first discover that the emperor seizes the glory of his son's achievement: the destruction of Jerusalem. The recorded Circus Maximus inscription, the Flavian coinage, the surviving Arch of Titus relief, the *Epitome* of Dio (65–66.4), and Josephus' description all agree that Jerusalem's fall was the Flavians' definitive achievement. The temple spoils were the paramount symbol of this and the only compelling foreign attraction in the inaugural event. Josephus remarks, however, that the Senate had voted separate triumphs for the two men, no doubt to allow maximal glory for each. Vespasian's decision to hold a single joint event (7.120) might sound like modesty, but a moment's thought, or reading between the lines, leads one to ask what Vespasian could have displayed in his own triumph. He had garrisoned various towns in this longstanding province, burned empty villages, and killed the weak. What could those have yielded as tangible proof of his glory? Perhaps some local shrubbery or bitumen from the Asphaltites lake (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 12.111–12), which would not a triumph make.

In Josephus' description, the father imposes himself on the big day itself, driving his chariot in first place behind the temple spoils (7.152). He personally covets these objects, "exalting himself because of them" (σεμνυνόμενος ἐπ' αὐτοῖς). After the triumph, he preserves some of the temple furnishings in his private residence on the Palatine, reserving the more spectacular for permanent display in the Temple of Pax in his new forum, from 75 (7.161–2).

I do not pretend to have given a full accounting of Josephus' Vespasian, which would require much more space. Undoubtedly there are tokens of respect throughout: for the man's prudence, as when he counsels against a rapid assault on Jerusalem (4.366–76), for his lack of vindictiveness in reconciling with the Commagenian royals (7.219–43), and above all for his growing respect for Judaeans fighters. Contemplating what lies ahead in the Judaeans mother-*polis*, Vespasian articulates Josephus' main theme: "He reckoned that even without walls, the high spirit of these men and their daring actions would be difficult to deal with" (τὰ δὲ φρονήματα τῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ τὰς τόλμιας δυσμεταχειρίστους καὶ δίχα τειχῶν ὑπελάμβανεν). So he trained his soldiers just like athletes for contests (*BJ* 4.89–90). Most interesting for us is the way in which Josephus plays against the mythic dimensions of Flavian imaging to describe a fully human commander, with feet of the lowliest clay. His Vespasian is not a heroic type. He is a man with a peculiar persona who faces tests and responds in keeping with his character. His greatness is not in question, but Josephus' *War* assumes it rather than

trying to prove or exalt it. The most unforgettable and protracted image of Vespasian in the work is of the world's most powerful man, leading the most fearsome army, being held at bay for weeks outside a no-account town in Galilee – by the young Judaeen priest Josephus. Vespasian's greatness serves to valorize the Judaeen people and their self-appointed spokesman.

Titus

The same realistic mode of characterization continues with Titus, although the character is entirely different. I do not mean that we know the real Titus and that Josephus faithfully portrays him. I mean that the portrayal does not deal in abstractions, as one would expect from Josephus' reputation as a Flavian booster, but depicts a distinctive personality. Titus' admirable qualities and potential shortcomings differ notably from those of his father.

Those who claim to find a panegyric of Titus in Josephus have trouble clearly illustrating it.²⁷ After noting that, in Josephus depictions, Titus' brutality is sometimes moderated by clemency, Zvi Yavetz detects panegyric when Vespasian's officers, demanding that he challenge Vitellius, appeal to his qualities *and those of his son* (*BJ* 4.597). But this is too indirect for encomium. John Curran presents as sycophancy Josephus' description of the perils faced by the Tenth Legion – as a result of Judaeen daring – which only Titus' intervention could neutralize (*BJ* 5.81–97).²⁸ I would rather include that among the more subtle ways in which G.M. Paul finds that Josephus "favours Titus." One device is his use of past unreal conditions for battlefield situations: "all would have been lost, had not Titus arrived." Paul also cites a highly rhetorical speech that Titus orders Josephus' character to deliver outside Jerusalem's walls, which includes the claim that Jerusalem's spring has begun to flow copiously with Titus' arrival (*παρουσία*, *BJ* 5.409–11). Paul suggests that the Greek word suggests a heroic or divine figure. In Josephus, however, *παρουσία* appears often in connection with nobody special.²⁹

For perspective we should recall what unstinting praise of Titus looked like, even in prose authors. The Elder Pliny opens his great encyclopedia by lavishing praise on Titus' character and his political, military, and literary achievements – "the empire lives with you as equal" (*ex aequo tecum vivat imperium*) – well before Vespasian's death (*Nat. praef.* 1–6). Long after Titus was gone, Suetonius introduced his praise of the man's impressive physical and mental qualities (*Tit.* 2–3) with the famous caption "the love and darling of the human race" (*amor ac deliciae generis humani*, *Tit.* 1). Even the jaded Tacitus found in Titus a happy combination of character, fortune, beauty, and majesty of countenance (*Hist.* 2.1). Josephus has nothing like this, as far as

I can see, although, strangely, he is the only one with a reputation for Titorphilia.³⁰ Brian Jones captures Josephus' Titus better when he remarks of the historical figure, "[A]t best he was competent and brave, at worst foolhardy and naïve."³¹

Titus' activities in Josephus' account fall in three periods: under his father as legate of the Legio XV Apollinaris (AD 67–9); following Vespasian's departure, his direction of the Jerusalem siege (April–September 70); and his final actions in the east before the triumph. We shall focus on the first period because it is the least explored³² and because it lays a foundation for the rest.

As long as Vespasian is in Syria, Titus is a supporting player. Since he is Vespasian's son, and virtual co-regent at Josephus' time of writing, it is not surprising that he receives more attention than other legionary legates, aside from considerations of friendship and gratitude from Josephus.

In discussing Vespasian above, we have already noted some relevant episodes for this period. Titus makes his narrative debut when he leads the panic outside Iotapata over his father's foot injury (*BJ* 3.238). This anticipates enduring themes in Josephus' portrait of the young man: Titus' distress is motivated by commendable concern (εὐνοία) for his father – but what does this portend for his military effectiveness? We also saw that compassion moves Titus to intervene with his father to spare Josephus' life. At Agrippa's Taricheae, by contrast, Titus is ferocious and unsparing of innocent life. And at Gamala an exasperated Titus must remedy his father's failure.

Three other episodes from this early period greatly nuance the picture of Jerusalem's conqueror in Rome, renowned for his military prowess, high spirit, and literary talent. First, when the little town of Iapha turns defiant in solidarity with Iotapata, it is quickly subdued by Trajan senior (father of the future emperor), commanding the redoubtable Tenth Legion Fretensis. Sent by Vespasian with 3,000 soldiers to deal with the small town, Trajan quickly has his hand around its throat. But then he magnanimously sends word to Vespasian, offering the *coup de grâce* with its minor glory to young Titus. Titus eagerly arrives with a supplementary force half the size of Trajan's. He assumes tactical direction, arranging the Romans' overwhelming numbers against the hapless countryfolk, who are by now bereft even of their young men. Titus and Trajan get more than they bargain for, however. Not only the old and very young males but especially the town's women throw everything they have at the soldiers, and in this way they prolong the fight for hours. The humiliated Romans cut the throats of all the males they find, leaving only infants and women for enslavement (3.298–306). Is this a glorious victory for young Titus? Josephus' story is, again, about the indomitable Judaeian character in the face of overwhelming odds.

Second, Titus' fixing of the situation at Gamala (above) comes after he has been given the lead in pacifying Taricheae. When Vespasian agrees to help Agrippa, he sends Titus to fetch the Fifth and Tenth legions from coastal Caesarea while Vespasian gathers the Fifteenth from nearby Scythopolis (3.446). The father and his other generals quickly chase the troublemakers to Taricheae. Titus returns in time for a key role in what comes next. Like Iapha, this looks like his father's effort at supervised training and confidence building, with Vespasian's camp ready nearby for backup if needed. Hearing that militants are gathered in the plain near Taricheae, Titus takes an imposing force of 600 cavalymen, with the intention of surprising and destroying them. On arrival, he decides that his force is not large enough for the tough Judaeans. While awaiting reinforcements, he must give a rousing speech to encourage his elite but dispirited horsemen – again enhancing Josephus' picture of Boer-like Judaeans irregulars. Even Rome's most elite forces despair of taking them.

Titus' oration does its job and, once Trajan senior is alongside with an additional 400 cavalry, their force attacks. Contrary to their plan, however, they drive the militants *into* Agrippa's peaceful town. Titus orders a hot pursuit inside the walls. As we have seen, this leads to indiscriminate slaughter (3.500). His father, nonetheless "overjoyed at his son's prowess and success" (ὑπερησθεὶς τῇ τε τοῦ παιδὸς ἀρετῇ καὶ τῷ κατορθώματι, 3.504), moves in to consolidate. Their first order of business, before the fake offer of safe passage described above, is to chase down those who have fled to the lake on boats. Vespasian orders rafts built, pursues them, and fills the lake with stinking corpses (3.305, 22–331).

That Suetonius (*Tit.* 4.3) singles out Taricheae and Gamala as Titus' key victories while at his father's side might suggest this writer's knowledge of Josephus' *War*, or something like it. He includes the detail (not found in Josephus) that Titus, when his horse was shot by an arrow beneath him, seized that of a fallen comrade.³³ If Suetonius knew Josephus' work, it would be telling that he mentions neither the challenge from Iapha's women nor our third episode involving Titus: Gischala. This was surely Titus' greatest blunder of the war, because of its grave consequences for Jerusalem. If events occurred in anything like the way Josephus relates, which seems a reasonable assumption in a work that was known to Titus (*V* 361; *Ap.* 1.50), it is remarkable that Josephus would portray them in the way he does: suggesting that Titus lacked even common sense, never mind tactical acumen.

By the time that Vespasian has wrapped up his assistance to King Agrippa II with the taking of Gamala (late September 67), nearly all the region's population centres have sent envoys to confirm their submission, but two still require visits. Towering 450 metres above Galilee's Jezreel Valley,

Mount Tabor is one of these. Vespasian assigns his devious general Placidus to this task. He succeeds with relative ease, after a false pledge of security (*BJ* 4.54–61).

The other suspect site is Gischala, a small agricultural settlement in remote Upper Galilee (*BJ* 4.84), near today's Lebanon border. Here Vespasian sends Titus with 1,000 cavalrymen, while he himself leads the legions to winter quarters in coastal Caesarea (4.87–8). Perhaps this is the next level of confidence building: Titus leading a small campaign with no safety net. Evidently, neither Flavian expected trouble for the thousand-strong force. The principal man of Gischala, John, was earlier Josephus' rival and potentially lethal enemy. It is conceivable that Josephus alerted Vespasian to John's town as a place worth visiting in force before leaving the region.

On his arrival, according to Josephus, Titus sees that his cavalry can indeed easily overrun Gischala. However, he has tired of killing. Pitying the town's inhabitants, gentle Titus prefers that they submit voluntarily and accept a garrison (4.92–6). Their wily leader John, while professing his eagerness to receive a garrison, points out that, unfortunately, it is the sabbath,³⁴ on which Judaeans may not conclude treaties. Titus would surely not want a reputation for impiety. The only reason not to allow them a day's delay would be fear of their flight, but Titus can easily prevent this, John advises, "by camping around the perimeter to guard them" (ἐξὸν περιστρατοπεδεύσαντα παραφυλάξαι, 4.101). John will happily welcome a garrison the following day, when the sabbath has passed.

In case the ruse were not obvious, Josephus makes it plain that John "played Titus" (ἐσοφίζετο τὸν Τίτον, 4.103). So oblivious is Titus that he does not even take the precautions that John assumed. Instead of digging in, he leads his elite soldiers to the nearest non-Judaean town, a good hour's ride away, for a comfortable overnight. John cannot believe his good fortune (4.106) and wastes no time fleeing south toward Jerusalem's strong walls, with his militant crew and their families. They have many hours on Titus, therefore, when he is shocked to find them gone the next morning. He sends a party after them, which catches only stragglers (4.112–16). As for those who are left, Josephus expatiates on Titus' distaste for the death penalty, with its finality, and his reluctance to accept tattletale charges. So he completes his mission to garrison the town, albeit rather ingloriously, with the loss of its most troublesome residents to Jerusalem (4.118–20).

When Josephus allows that the young commander "was gutted that he had not been able to punish John right then for his trick" (ὁ δὲ Τίτος ἤχθετο μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ μὴ παραχρῆμα τιμωρήσασθαι τὸν Ἰωάννην τῆς ἀπάτης, 4.116), it only advertises Titus' impotence. Nor does it much ameliorate the monumental blunder – though it makes the stakes clear – when Josephus observes that

it was really God who preserved John, so that he would cause the Romans to destroy Jerusalem (4.104). Josephus immediately follows up the episode of John's escape by describing his hero's welcome in Jerusalem (4.121–34) and the specious foundation of his rapid rise in popular esteem there. His outrages will eventually lead the townsfolk to admit the exceedingly brutal Simon bar Giora, whom they had managed to keep out of Jerusalem, when they can bear John's tyranny no longer. These two men generate the lethal *stasis* that will ensure the city's doom (1.10–11; 4.389–97, 503–44, 556–84). When we consider that Josephus' Roman audience must know the names of John and Simon, as the two leaders featured in the Flavian triumph (6.433–4; 7.118, 154), Josephus' picture of John's wrapping Titus around his finger is all the more impactful. It is no wonder that Suetonius omits Gischala from Titus' dossier under Vespasian, or that he credits Gamala to him instead.

This period as Vespasian's lieutenant lays the foundation for Josephus' portrait of Titus, when the young man takes up his most famous role as Jerusalem's besieger. Titus' hope is to intimidate the besieged capital into submission. Yet, as he witnesses the Judaeans' contempt for death, he is forced to escalate the vigour of his assaults and his use of psychological operations. Like his father, Titus combines a powerful aversion to risking Roman soldiers with acts of personal bravery. His bravery is needed surprisingly often, however, because he must repeatedly rescue his ill-disciplined forces. Although he gradually hardens and can even show brutality at moments (5.446–551), Titus never loses the image of "simplicity" that is at times indistinguishable from gullibility (5.319).

We cannot close this survey without comment on *War's* climactic event, the destruction of the temple. Josephus' account is consistent with his overall portrait of Titus' character. He always acknowledges Titus' role in destroying the famous holy site, while claiming with equal consistency that Titus did not want the site destroyed (*BJ* 1.10, 27–8; 6.266; *AJ* 20.250). Most historians of the war would like us either to believe Josephus, a trust that would be naive, or to read his account as a sycophant's "exculpation" of Titus for having ordered the temple's destruction – the Flavian's biggest boast in Rome.³⁵ This is a false choice. First, we need not assume that Titus gave any orders about the temple. In the fog of war, many scenarios could have resulted in the temple's burning, and Josephus could still have produced a story highlighting divine agency. Second, his account of how Titus was frustrated does not redound to the general's glory.

In the story, Titus is constantly changing tactics in his effort to secure Jerusalem's surrender. After he hears about an episode of cannibalism inside the walls, he resolves in fury to reduce the city to ashes. He thus orders the temple compound destroyed and its gates burned (*BJ* 6.214–19, 228).

But during a further consultation with his commanders, his anger now cooled, he realizes that his fight is not with these famous buildings. It will enhance Rome's image if he can preserve them (6.236–43). So he orders the fires extinguished, to prepare for an assault on the men inside. The next day he watches proceedings from the safety of a tower until, satisfied that the enemy are confined to the inner temple and the fires are being extinguished, he heads for a siesta, intending a full attack at dawn (6.248–9). While he sleeps, an anonymous auxiliary soldier in the cleanup crew, having come under attack from those within – and “moved by some other-worldly impulse” – tosses a firebrand through a window and unwittingly sets the temple stores ablaze (6.250–3).

When Titus is awakened, he is apoplectic with rage, but there is nothing he can do. He screams and waves his arms. But his legionaries, whom he has held back in preparation for the big assault, charge past him in a stampede of the temple courts, to get their share. Although the inner sanctuary could still have been saved, Josephus remarks, “passion became the general for all ... Once near the shrine, the [legionaries] pretended that they could not hear Caesar's instructions, but urged those in front of them to take the fire inside” (ἀλλ' ὁ θυμὸς ἀπάντων ἐστρατήγει ... πλησίον δὲ τοῦ ναοῦ γινόμενοι τῶν μὲν τοῦ Καίσαρος παραγγεμάτων προσεποιούντο μηδὲ κατακούειν, τοῖς πρὸ αὐτῶν δὲ τὸ πῦρ ἐνιέναι παρεκελεύοντο, 6.257–8). Again, “their passions, their hatred toward the Judaeans, and a violent warrior instinct prevailed over their respect for Caesar or indeed their fear of the one trying to hold them back” (τῶν δὲ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Καίσαρα αἰδῶ καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ κωλύοντος φόβον ἐνίκων οἱ θυμοὶ καὶ τὸ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους μῖσος, καὶ πολεμικὴ τις ὁρμὴ λαβροτέρα, 6.263). The matter is now out of Titus' hands, and *this* is how the temple burns “against Caesar's will” (6.266). This would be a most peculiar way to exculpate Titus or honour his virtue. In any case, there was nothing to apologize for in Rome, where the temple furnishings were the Flavians' main spoils. The story shows rather that Titus' designs and “resolve” had to yield to the tragic role assigned him by the Judaeans' God. He is a supporting actor, not the centrepiece, in this Judaeian narrative.

Conclusion

I have argued that Josephus' *Judaean War* is a profoundly Judaeian story, in which the Flavians play only supporting roles along with other Roman leaders. It is a history of Jerusalem's remarkable success under Roman rule before the catastrophic fall. The whole account quietly undermines Flavian claims about an alleged conquest. Josephus' debts to Thucydides and Polybius in this pragmatic-political history are welded to a biblical-Judaean

frame, according to which nations rise and fall under divine supervision. Rome is currently ascendant, and it is wise to accept this, as Judaeans have done to their advantage since Pompey. Josephus casts all this in the universally intelligible language in which he seems also to have thought: τύχη and her reversals, *polis* leadership and its hazards, tyranny, sacred spaces, pollution, and purification.

His Flavians are recognizable human beings of distinct personality, not bathed in the *topoi* of hero worship. Gruff and tough Vespasian is careless of enemy life and will do whatever he must to subdue them quickly. This earns him the steadfast loyalty of his soldiers, for he minimizes their risks, leads from the front, and gives them abundant rest and training. They eventually force him to seize imperial power, for their sake as much as his. His possible character flaws, never analysed by Josephus, of course, follow from his temperament: callousness toward others, readiness to violate pledges of safety, and stealing others' achievements. He meets unexpected resourcefulness and national pride from the Judaeans of Galilee, especially in the brilliant adversary Josephus.

Vespasian is careful to give Titus a graduated series of combat experiences to build confidence and reputation, but his young son is a different sort of man. Although they share the trait of personal bravery, Josephus' Titus (as perhaps everyone's Titus) is a rather more sympathetic figure. He shows astonishing sensitivity and empathy toward even enemies, and so saves Josephus' life. The potential weaknesses of his personality, which are also left between the lines and never analysed, although they seem clear enough, are the lack of guile associated with military commanders, the lack of a killer instinct, and a tendency to gullibility. His relationship with his soldiers is correspondingly very different from his father's. Even at critical moments, he must often deal with the kind of low-grade and dispersed insubordination that is hard to punish effectively.

Plainly Josephus did not write in the service of Flavian myth-making. But then how should we think about his relationship to good faith (*fides* or πίστις) toward the ruling family? He could not have wholly invented his claims of Flavian support, even if he exaggerated (V 363; *Ap.* 1.50). What could the Flavians have found creditable and useful here?

Perhaps the question boils down to what is most important in their reciprocal relationship of *fides*: Is it trustworthiness, fair dealing with each other, loyal flattery, or faithfulness to the historian's task and to the real-life characters? Suetonius' biography of Vespasian, albeit a generation after his death, glows with omens and virtues. It is more overtly laudatory than Josephus' *War*, but Suetonius also describes a distinct character, one with a weakness for personal avarice and a crude sense of humour (*Vesp.* 16, 19, 22–3). He

remarks, interestingly, that Vespasian did not take offence easily or remember slights, even reconciling with Vitellius' family after the civil war (14). Not only did he "tolerate with great patience the frankness of friends, the ironic allusions of pleaders, and the obstinacy of philosophers" (*amicorum libertatem, causidicorum figuras ac philosophorum contumaciam lenissime tulit*; 13), but when some flatterers cooked up a divine ancestry for him he laughed at the silliness of it (12).

It may be that such a ruler preferred hard-nosed history, such as Josephus offers, to the cheap flattery of the lackeys whom both Josephus and Tacitus ridicule (*BJ* 1.1–8; *Hist.* 2.101). Perhaps Vespasian did not mind seeing himself throwing non-swimmers in the Dead Sea or breaking promises to terrorists – as long as the historian encouraged cooperation with his rule. Perhaps Vespasian and Titus understood that a judicious account by an intelligent Judaeans, proud of his own heritage and people, was a more credible basis for political relations than run-of-the-mill obsequiousness.

The genuineness of Josephus' loyalty to the Flavians is shown by his consistent gratitude, long after they and possibly Domitian are dead. In his *Antiquities*, completed in 93/94, he expresses awe at the forbearance and generosity (*ἐπιείκεια καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνη*) of Vespasian and Titus when they refused the petitions of Alexandria and Antioch for a curtailment of Judaeans rights in those major eastern *poleis* (*AJ* 12.120–9). As we saw above, Josephus' autobiographical appendix to the *Antiquities* concludes with a list of Flavian benefactions – "continued" by Domitian's wife, Domitilla, which might suggest that the emperor's assassination is recent.³⁶

Just as the Flavian rulers maintained their *fides* toward Judaeans throughout the empire and toward Josephus, continuing a long tradition of warm relations with Jerusalem and expatriate communities, Josephus remained deeply loyal to his Flavian benefactors throughout his life. But this did not prevent him from using great Roman figures to serve his own literary interests in extolling his humiliated people and advertising his own character. It is even conceivable that the unsuccessful accusations of *maiestas* that he faced in Rome, swatted away by Vespasian, gained traction from the independent hues of his writing.³⁷

NOTES

- 1 The *TLG* shows the eminent grammarian Aelius Herodian, for example, citing Josephus frequently for Judaeans names.
- 2 See Lindsay 1993 for a survey of πίστις.
- 3 Cohen 1982; Stern 1987; Spilsbury 2003.
- 4 Mason 2016: 199–280.

- 5 Josephus is missing from such standard treatments of Roman literary culture as Ogilvie 1980, Salles 1992, and Fantham 1996, though the last has two chapters on the Flavian period. The much expanded revision (Fantham 2013) still leaves him out (cf. also Augoustakis 2016a). Revealing is Bowie 1970: 15, in an essay that hunts down even fragmentary and neglected local Greek authors. Bowie mentions Josephus only as evidence for the lost histories of the post-Nero civil war, but otherwise excludes the works of “a Jewish writer outside the main Greek tradition.” Still, the attached note 41 concedes that “his approach and arguments fall squarely within the Greek tradition that goes back to Thucydides, and ... in this sense he does fall in the main Greek tradition.”
- 6 The entry for Josephus in Marincola’s index (1997: 349), exceeding those for Cato the Elder, Caesar, or Cassius Dio and rivalling that for Herodotus, reflects his value for studying themes and tendencies in Greco-Roman historiography.
- 7 Given that Josephus’ corpus is the largest extant from Flavian Rome, the twenty-seven chapters in Zissos 2016b are notably reticent. Josephus is named in several chapters (e.g., in relation to his sources, Titus, Judaea, foreigners, literary culture, spectacle), His works are briefly summarized as evidence for the period (Hurlet 2016: 21–2) and cited for various historical conditions (e.g., Brighton 2016), but they are not explored as other literature is.
- 8 E.g., Hurlet 2016: 21–2: “The proximity of Josephus to the new regime makes him a valuable witness, capable of understanding the Flavian political program, and of transmitting elements of its ‘official’ version.” Similarly Beard 2003: 543.
- 9 The creators of the scheme were Laqueur 1920: 245–78; Weber 1921: 246 (Josephus, “prophet of the new Caesar,” borrowed a Flavian source for much of Books 3 to 7) and 283–4; and Thackeray 1929: 3, 15–16, 37–9, 42, 52–3. NB: Josephus claimed to have consulted the generals’ field notes (5.342, 358; *Ap.* 1.56; cf. *AJ* 15.174), but this appears as primary research used for his purposes, a very different thing from copying out an official chronicle. More recent echoes of the classical scheme are in, for example, Künzl 1988: 9 (Josephus stood “auf der Seite der Römer und nicht mehr auf der seines Volkes”); Beard 2003: 558 (“besotted with the Flavians”); and Curran 2007: 77 (“His depiction of Vespasian is adulatory and that of Titus little short of sycophantic”).
- 10 Cf. Bentwich 1914: 54, who characterizes the surrender story as “a sad compound of cant and cowardice” and notes “pusillanimity and subservience to his Roman patrons ... He is at once vain and obsequious, servile and spiteful, professing candor and practising adulation ... As a general he proved himself a traitor” (255–6).
- 11 E.g., Hurlet 2016: 21: “Josephus, who fought against Rome prior to joining the Flavians ... a close associate of the new dynasty”; Murison 2016: 91: “Josephus, the one-time insurrectionist-general turned Flavian propagandist”; Parker 2016: 283: “in the course of the war, changed allegiance and joined the Romans”;

- Kemezis 2016: 464: "The references [to Vespasian and Titus] are uniformly positive, which is ... awkward given that Josephus had begun his career fighting against them as a rebel in Judaea only to end it in Rome as their favored dependent."
- 12 Rajak 1983 was decisive in laying out a more complex picture of Josephus' social-political position
 - 13 Lindner 1972: 65 (Vespasian's rise to power); Eberhardt 2005: 274–5, 277 (the triumph); McLaren 2005: (Titus); Mason 2005 (Titus and Domitian).
 - 14 Den Hollander 2014 comes closest, in treating Josephus' relations with each of the Flavian rulers *in Rome*. Material from Josephus' portraits of these men is obviously relevant, but he does not try to interpret the narratives as such. In a study of the historical war, Mason 2016: 121–30 offers a brief survey of Josephus' *War* on Vespasian and Titus, as part of the interpretation of the work.
 - 15 Hurlet 2016: 21: "The Flavian dynasty is at the heart of this account, and it is not surprising that it is presented in a positive light." Kemezis 2016: 464: "Vespasian and Titus are major characters in the *Jewish War* ... The references are uniformly positive."
 - 16 According to the *TLG*, the *War* contains 125,274 words; according to the desktop program *Accordance*, about 320 more. Either way, the first two volumes account for 42 percent of the overall work: Book 1 has nearly 30,000 words and Book 2 more than 22,500.
 - 17 Cody 2003; Millar 2005; den Hollander 2014: 196–197; Mason 2016: 3–45.
 - 18 Mason 2016: 3–45.
 - 19 "Dammit, I guess I'm becoming a god" (Suet. *Vesp.* 23.4; cf. 12).
 - 20 Only *BJ* (2.562–8) presents Josephus, as a general given a personal command in the north. The later *V* 28–30 has him sent with two other priests to see how Galilee is faring and to persuade its people to remain peaceful.
 - 21 E.g., *BJ* 3.169, 175, 177, 188, 222–5, 227–35, 282–3.
 - 22 Suetonius had heard (*Vesp.* 4.6) that Vespasian took several arrows to the shield and was wounded in the knee by a stone.
 - 23 For Josephus, I use Niese 1888–95; all translations are my own.
 - 24 The original may have been simply Josephus' statement that Vespasian was a real *imperator*, and a preference for life in chains there over the hazardous trip to Nero.
 - 25 Lindner 1972: 65.
 - 26 For fuller detail, see Mason 2018. The story has points of resemblance with Josephus' account of Claudius' accession. Claudius likewise is desperate to preserve his private life in safety, but when found hiding in the dark by the Praetorian Guard is thrust into power (*AJ* 19.212–17).
 - 27 Yavetz 1975: 423, 431. Yavetz argues generally that Josephus admired Titus' clemency and chose to emphasize it just when Titus needed an image enhancement, before his accession (426–32).

- 28 Yavetz 1975; Curran 2007: 77 n. 11.
- 29 Paul 1993: 65. Mundane *parousia*: BJ 2.617, 4.345; AJ 1.287, 2.20, 5.109, 12.86, 160, 352, 13.266.
- 30 There is also a “bad Titus” (pre-accession) tradition, which asserted Titus’ brutality and hedonistic lifestyle while Praetorian Prefect in the 70s (Suet. *Tit.* 6). But this image seems tied to his position in the Guard and may have been created by misunderstood motives and actions there. Murison 2016: 81–6 summarizes the evidence and argues (86) that the conspiracy of two Flavian stalwarts, Caecina and Marcellus, is clearer evidence than any narrative assertions of high-level unease about Titus’ accession. Although elements of Josephus’ presentation (especially the stress on clemency) might support Yavetz’s 1975 suggestion that he wrote to help facilitate Titus’ transition from Guard to imperial palace, other aspects of the story would not show Titus as particular fit for world rule.
- 31 Jones 1989: 128; cf. 134: “always brave, never original ... a commander in the traditional mould”; and Jones 1992b and 1984: 34–76; see also McLaren 2005.
- 32 For Josephus’ Titus in Jerusalem and later, see Jones 1989 and 1992b; McLaren 2005; Mason 2005 and 2016: 402–65; and den Hollander 2014: 139–99.
- 33 Jones 1989: 130 says: “Suetonius is wrong. It was not Titus who *redegit Gamalam in potestatem* ... [T]he credit belongs to Vespasian” (132–3). Actually, Suetonius’ remark would make sense as a summary of Josephus’ account, in which Titus becomes the crucial player.
- 34 Sabbath goes from sundown to sundown. Titus’ return early the next morning expecting to do business (4.112) implies that he considers the sabbath over. But, if this is Sunday morning, the sabbath ended the previous evening and he had no need to go away. John’s initial indication that it would not be over until the following day suggests that Titus arrives on a Friday, as it is beginning. If so, Titus assumes Roman time-keeping (a day begins at midnight or dawn), or John misleads the naive fellow on this point, or Josephus has fabricated parts of the story in ways that Roman audiences might not notice.
- 35 Leoni 2007; Mason 2016: 466–513.
- 36 For discussion, see Mason 2001: 171–2nn1774–6.
- 37 See Schwartz 1990: 18n80; Mason 2001: 171n1771.

“A Greater Love”: *Fides* in Statius’ *Silvae*

NEIL W. BERNSTEIN

“A Greater Love”: *Fides* in Statius’ *Silvae*

This chapter examines the Flavian poet Statius’ deployment of *fides* as one of the structuring forces of interpersonal relations in the *Silvae*. I focus primarily on the poet’s appeal to *fides* as a means of imagining voluntary, enthusiastic participation in structures of domination. This is, of course, only one of the many ways that the Romans conceived of this multifarious virtue, but it is the one that reflects Statius’ priorities in his encomiastic collection.¹ In the *Silvae*, the relevant relationships of *fides* include the following: loyal subjects’ service to the emperor Domitian; a freedman’s loyalty to his patron (who in some cases is the same emperor); and a wife’s loyalty to her husband.

The same group of relationships recurs in the exemplary tradition, which celebrates the display of *fides* by subordinates *in extremis*. Tacitus, for example, remarks in the opening of the *Histories* on the unexpected loyalties displayed by wives and slaves amid the devastation of the war of AD 69: “Yet this age was not so barren of virtue that it did not display noble examples. Mothers accompanied their children in flight; wives followed their husbands into exile; relatives displayed courage, sons-in-law firmness, slaves a fidelity which defied even torture” (*non tamen adeo virtutum sterile saeculum ut non et bona exempla prodiderit. comitatae profugos liberos matres, secutae maritos in exilia coniuges: propinqui audentes, constantes generi, contumax etiam adversus tormenta seruorum fides*, *Hist.* 1.3; trans. C.H. Moore). Tacitus implies that, once civil war removes the social controls that preserve Roman hierarchy, no one should expect the average subject, son-in-law, spouse, or slave to remain loyal, let alone risk their lives during wartime. Examples of their loyalty should be retold because they are rare.² Valerius

Maximus' chapters *de fide* (6.6–8) similarly show *fides* tested under the threat of earlier civil wars. Slaves risk their lives for masters threatened by proscription, as do faithful wives for their husbands. *Fides* may appear like a voluntary exercise in stable times, but social instability reveals the reality that it is in fact perpetually reinforced through compulsion.

In contrast to the exemplary tradition, Statius' praise of *fides* speaks of subordinates' extraordinary loyalty to their superiors as a voluntary gift. These assertions must be balanced against the abundant evidence outside these poems that indicates that the threat of dismissal, divorce, or punishment compelled the service of subordinates in the hierarchical society of Flavian Rome.³ Yet many of Statius' addressees may indeed have served their emperor, patron, husband, or other authority with sincere enthusiasm. Speculation on the topic is irrelevant, as we can never know the true feelings behind their actions. We need not speculate on the sincerity of the poet's praise either: as in any other encomiastic genre, it too is for rhetorical effect.

What is relevant for the present discussion, then, is Statius' mastery of the communicative situation that the *Silvae* establish between the poet, his addressees, the emperor, and the reader.⁴ Though *fides* may be a fiction, it is nonetheless a valuable one. Appeal to the virtue enables the poet to reassert the ideal that structures the complex relationships between these parties. My approach in this chapter is accordingly similar to Christopher Chinn's discussion of Statius' fictions of *libertas* in *Silvae* 1.6 and Paul Roche's more recent collection of readings of Pliny's *Panegyricus*.⁵ The latter collection in particular can help us not to read Statius' words as meaningless flatteries, or tempt us to find a subversive message lurking under every simile. Both poet and senator use the resources of fiction and myth to describe idealized relationships between authorities and subordinates. The chapter concludes with a brief contrast with Claudian's use of *fides* language in the fourth-century western court of Honorius. Statius' assiduous imitator extends the fictions of voluntary *fides* to address an even more fraught social and political situation.

Slaves, Freedmen, and Patrons

At the level of the private household, Statius uses *fides* to describe slaves' and freedmen's discharge of their obligations toward their masters. In this section, I briefly contrast the two dead young men in the second book of the *Silvae*. These are Philetos, the slave of Flavius Ursus, and Glaucias, the freedman of Atedius Melior.⁶ Statius claims that the deceased slave Philetos is worth the tears of his master, thanks to his *fides*: "You mourn a slave ... but a faithful slave, Ursus, who deserved those tears by love and loyalty,

whose soul gave him a freedom beyond lineage. Suppress not your weeping, be not ashamed" (*sed famulum gemis, Urse, pium, sed amore fideque / has meritum lacrimas, cui maior stemmate iuncto / libertas ex mente fuit. ne comprime fletus, / ne pudeat, Silv.* 2.6.10–13). No matter how delicately Statius phrases the issue, Philetos serves his master Ursus' sexual pleasure as a *puer delicatus*. Description of his beauty and talent simply increases the estimate of his exchange value.⁷ Furthermore, the implicit comparison of Philetos to an animal that follows deprives the slave of human agency. In granting Ursus permission to mourn his mere slave unrestrainedly, Statius observes that owners mourn their faithful dogs in the same way: "The Parthian bemoans his horse slain in war, Molossians weep for their faithful hounds, birds have had their pyres and a stag his Maro" (*gemit inter bella peremptum / Parthus equum fidosque canes flevere Molossi / et volucres habuere rogam cervosque Maronem, Silv.* 2.6.18–20). Philetos may be faithful to his master, then, but it is viewed as similar to the *fides* of Fido, the faithful dog.⁸

By contrast, the absence of *fides* language in the similar poem mourning Atedius Melior's freedman Glaucias reinforces the distinction between the two subordinates. Statius claims that Melior would have made Glaucias his son and heir had he lived, whereas Ursus never extended such an offer to Philetos. The appropriate virtue to celebrate for a relationship involving a notional son is not *fides* but *pietas*, and it is this quality that the poet celebrates. The only occurrence of the *fid*- root in the poem occurs in a mythological comparison describing Acoetes, the companion of Pallas on the battlefield and accordingly an analogue to Melior.⁹ Statius describes Melior directly as Glaucias' *pious altor* (*Silv.* 2.1.69) and implies through a series of mythological comparisons that his *pietas* toward his adoptee conquers that of birth parents.¹⁰

The Imperial Household

In the public setting, *fides* describes an imperial freedman's discharge of his services for his emperor. It is a bureaucratic virtue that reinforces the structures of imperial domination.¹¹ Through his use of *fides* language, Statius assists dependants in proclaiming their loyalty to the emperor. As he reassured Ursus of his slave Philetos' *fides*, so Statius reassures Domitian that his far larger retinue of faithful subordinates discharges their duties enthusiastically and lovingly. These freedmen include the father of Claudius Etruscus (*Silv.* 3.3), mourned by his son, and Titus Flavius Abascantus (*Silv.* 5.1), whom Statius consoles for the loss of his recently deceased wife, Priscilla.¹²

The father of Claudius Etruscus was a freedman bureaucrat who served under several emperors. Vespasian appointed him to the important financial position of *libertus a rationibus* and permitted him to enter the equestrian order.¹³ Domitian, however, dismissed him and sent him into exile in Campania, allowing him to return to Rome only shortly before his death in AD 92 (Mart. 6.83). The consolation of Claudius Etruscus on the loss of his father provides Statius with the occasion of *Silvae* 3.3. The poem opens with an invocation of *Pietas* as "greatest of the gods," who favours the "pious mourning" of Etruscus for his father.¹⁴ The son who presides over his funeral is the incarnation of *pietas*, as he was one of the few sons who did not wish his father dead before his time. Statius claims that it is *mira fides* (*Silv.* 3.3.21) that Claudius Etruscus loved his father and did not wish his early death. Martial (6.83.8) adds the detail that the son had accompanied his father into exile.

Fides, not *pietas*, however, characterizes the virtue of the freedman father of Claudius Etruscus and his service to the emperors. The narrator modifies the topos in which reproduction is a parental obligation in order to consider just who the father is breeding his children for. The imperial secretary married Etrusca not for his own benefit but in order to "beget faithful retainers for [his] lord" (*et fidos domino genuisse clientes*, *Silv.* 3.3.110).¹⁵ His wife comes from a loyal family too: Etrusca's *frater* ... *fidus* held a consulship and led troops in the Dacian war.¹⁶ Etruscus in turn refers to his father as "most faithful" in the opening of his lament:

cur nos, fidissime, linquis
Fortuna redeunte, pater? modo numina magni
praesidis atque breves superum placavimus iras
nec frueris, tantique orbatus muneris usu
ad manes, ingrate, fugis!

(Stat. *Silv.* 3.3.182–6)

Why do you leave us, truest of fathers, when Fortune is coming back? We have just appeased the godhead of our great ruler and the brief anger of the High Ones, and you profit not; robbed of the benefit of so great a boon, you flee to the Underworld, ingrate!

This passage exemplifies Statius' talent for the unexpected narrative turn. Etruscus' praise of *fides* initially suggests that his father exemplified the virtue toward his spouse and children. The shift of reference to Domitian's pardon and recall indicates that loyalty has a dual purpose. The father's faithfulness toward the family that accompanied him into exile is but the reflection of his loyal service to his emperor. Moments such as these suggest

how even putatively “private” aspects of family life can be viewed as reinforcing the broader theme of public loyalty to the emperor.

Statius likely wrote *Silvae* 5.1 in AD 94 or later, which the biographical sources characterize as the paranoid phase of Domitian’s reign.¹⁷ Statius includes the appointment of military commands among Domitian’s obligations: *fidus dominus si dividat enses* (“if our lord should be distributing his faithful swords,” *Silv.* 5.1.94). Bruce Gibson’s note observes that the recentness of Saturninus’ revolt in AD 89 suggests that *fidus* is not merely formulaic but reflective of the emperor’s increasing insecurity. Statius addresses the poem to Titus Flavius Abascantus, the emperor’s *libertus ab epistulis*, consoling him for the death of his wife, Priscilla. Priscilla may have been equestrian, and Abascantus may have depended on her intercession for his position.¹⁸ In his preface to the poem, Statius highlights Abascantus’ love for his departed spouse as an example to benefit the public.¹⁹ Statius grants *fides* a religious dimension in relation to the godlike emperor, whose freedmen worship him as if they were his priests. He aligns his own love for the emperor with that of Abascantus: “whoever worships the gods in good faith, loves their priests too” (*nam qui bona fide deos colit amat et sacerdotes*, *Silv.* 5 *praef.*). Faithful execution of mundane duties complements the secretary’s religious service. As in *Silv.* 3.3, the emperor’s awareness of his subordinates’ loyalties matters: the poet praises Domitian’s perception of Abascantus’ *intactam fidem* amid the freedman’s abundance of other virtues, such as diligence, vigilance, and judgment.²⁰

Priscilla also exemplified *hilaris fides* (*Silv.* 5.1.65) toward her husband.²¹ Statius characterizes her fidelity through a lengthy series of mythological comparisons. She would have withstood the temptations of Paris, Thyestes, Penelope’s suitors, and so forth (57–66). Statius concedes that her willingness to undergo hardships for her husband was not in fact tested but praises her for praying to the emperor to favour her husband (66–74). Alex Hardie read this passage as designed to persuade Domitian to retain Abascantus in his job.²² Gibson, however, suggests that this is an overstatement. Abascantus’ position may not in fact have been under threat, and Statius also points to friendship between Priscilla and his own wife (*Silv.* 5.1.5–6).²³ Her *fides* to her husband accordingly complements his *fides* to his master. Domitian may be a god and Abascantus his faithful priest, but cult worship has its limitations. The husband’s *fides* could not prevent *infida* Fortune from taking away Priscilla.²⁴ The husband’s love for the emperor, however, saved him from joining Priscilla in death. He would have killed himself, but for his *fides*: “but loyalty to the leader forbids, to be strengthened for the sacred commands, and a greater love” (*sed prohibet mens fida duci firmandaque sacris / imperiis et maior amor*, *Silv.* 5.1.207–8).²⁵ This example of spousal

fides is accordingly a contrast to the examples with which I began, those of Tacitus and Valerius Maximus that emphasize its performance in wartime. It is the palace context in which Priscilla and Abascantus performed their *fides* that makes discussion of the quality a benefit to the public.

Statius' Marriage

Statius drew on a lengthy poetic tradition, including elegy and funerary epigram, to characterize the *fides* of spouses in the marriages of the *Silvae*.²⁶ Funerary epigram presents several instances of the topos,²⁷ and Statius extends, develops, and individualizes a series of familiar themes. The poetic tradition also celebrates the faithful wife: thus Catullus and the elegists present her as the counterpoint to the faithless *amica*, while protesting loudly about their own *fides* to their mistresses and friends.²⁸ Although praise of marital *fides* may be a traditional component of encomium, it acquires additional significance in Domitian's Rome. The emperor declared his interest in overseeing family life by renewing the Augustan marriage laws and taking the title of *censor perpetuus*.

In the final poem of Book 3, Statius discusses marital *fides* in an address to his living wife, Claudia. John Henderson surveyed the poem's associations with the prior literature of marital separation:²⁹ Cicero's separation from his wife and daughter, as described in his letters to Terentia; Ovid's exile from his wife and daughter in the *Tristia*; and Lucan's narrative of Pompey's separation from Cornelia. Exile or war, however, caused the separation in each of these earlier poems; Statius is merely seeking peaceful retirement. More recently, Carole Newlands has discussed the poem in the context of Statius' representations of Naples and Campania as idealized poetic *loci*.³⁰ Stephanie McCarter examines the relationship between *Silvae* 3.5 and Horace's first *Epistle*, his poetic bid for retirement.³¹ Yet Statius' retirement does not appear to institute a permanent shift to a different location or a different genre.³² The opening poems of *Silvae* 4 are set in Rome, and they are monumental panegyrics of Domitian rather than the lighter works that Statius associated with Naples in *Silvae* 3.5. Statius informs us that his wife could have decided to remain in Rome, as she was a woman of independent means who had a daughter by her previous husband. His discussion of their future cohabitation in Naples as a question of *fides* is therefore a considered decision, and one qualitatively new in Roman personal poetry. It is not the only way that the issue could have been broached, particularly in a public address. Whatever discussion actually transpired between the two and whatever kind of retirement the poet actually desired are not for us to know. What is clear from the poem

is that some Romans could conceive of a wife's disinclination to follow her husband to a distant city as related to her *fides*.

Statius argues throughout the poem that his wife's *fides* is not in fact in question, attesting frequently to her superlative exemplification of this virtue. The well-known temptations of the Bay of Naples, salaciously decried from Cicero's *Pro Caelio* to Juvenal's *Satires*, will simply have no more effect upon this paragon of *fides* than the temptations of the circus and theatre at Rome. As McCarter and Newlands emphasize, Naples is the poet's home, a calm retreat, and a place to explore the lighter genres of poetry in lieu of the grim *Thebaid*.³³ As in *Silvae* 5.1, the consolation of Abascantus and eulogy of Priscilla, Statius uses mythological examples to praise Claudia's *fides*. Statius emphasizes the situation of women who were abandoned by their husbands at home: Penelope, Aegiale, Meliboea, and Laodamia:³⁴

heu ubi nota fides totque explorata per usus,
qua veteres, Latias Graias, heroidas aequas?
isset ad Iliacas (quid enim deterret amantes?)
Penelope gavis domos, si passus Ulixes;
questa est Aegiale, questa est Meliboea relinqui,
et quam tam saevi fecerunt maenada planctus.
nec minor his tu nosse fidem vitamque maritis
dedere. sic certe cineres umbramque priorem
quaeris adhuc, sic exsequias amplexa canori
coniugis ingentes iterasti pectore planctus
iam mea.

(Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.44–54)

Alas! Where is your familiar loyalty, proven in so many trials, that puts you alongside the ancient heroines of Latium and Greece? Penelope would gladly have gone to the dwellings of Ilium (for what do lovers fear?) if Ulysses had suffered it. Aegiale made moan to be left behind, and Meliboea, and she whom cruel lamentation made Maenad; and you know as well as they how to be loyal and give your life for your man. So at least you still seek the ashes and shade of him that was, so you embraced the obsequies of your songful spouse, raining violent blows on your breast yet again, when you were already mine.

Proof of Claudia's *fides* comes in her ongoing devotion not to Statius but to her dead first husband, whom she continued to mourn even when married to the poet. Statius tactfully does not mention the misfortunes of the widow Dido, who attempts to remarry, but this situation certainly mobilizes this comparandum as well. The comparisons for Priscilla in *Silvae* 5.1 also include Penelope, but mostly emphasize the contrast between

this good wife and faithless wives such as Helen and Aerope, wife of Thyestes (*Silv.* 5.1.57–63). Both of these catalogues of paradigmatic marital *fides* reflect similar catalogues found in Propertius and Ovid.³⁵ Examples include Calypso, Hypsipyle, Alpheisiboea, and Evadne (Prop. 1.15.9–24); Penelope, Laodamia, Alcestis, and Evadne (Ov. *Ars* 3.15–25); and Andromache, Laodamia, and Penelope (Ov. *Trist.* 1.6.19–22).³⁶ It is possible that the two catalogues may share more than just a generic affiliation, as Statius also points in the latter poem to friendship between Priscilla and his own wife (*Silv.* 5.1.5–6).

The abundant occurrence of these *fides*-topoi shows that the threat of prospective adultery cannot be the real issue in Statius' poem to his wife. Statius is instead adverting to Claudia's obedience and support, as seen in her sympathy for his defeat in the Capitoline games, her understanding of the labour involved in the composition of the *Thebaid*, and her care for him during his illness (31–42). Claudia might almost seem to be an equal partner to the poet thanks to her labours of *fides*, but the events and decisions mentioned in the poem all stem from Statius' choices, not hers. As in *Silvae* 3.3, where the father of Claudius Etruscus exemplified superlative *fides* both to Domitian and to his family, the superior creates the framework in which the subordinate performs his or her *fides*.

The *Silvae* also provide a strong contrast to Claudia's loyalty in the figure of Crispinus' murderous mother (*Silv.* 5.2). Crispinus' mother had been charged with the attempted poisoning of her son, tried, and executed. According to Statius, our only source of evidence for this case, Domitian himself had exacted punishment (75–97).³⁷ Through his perfect *pietas*, a reflection of Domitian's moral restoration (5.2.92), Crispinus urges forgiveness for his mother. As Noelle Zeiner observes, Crispinus' spirit of reconciliation is unusual in such a young man, and the association with the emperor through the virtue of *pietas* flatters both men.³⁸ The presence of an evil wife and mother in the actual world of the *Silvae*, as opposed to its constant mythological frame of reference, emphasizes the fidelity of the good wives of the collection, Claudia and Priscilla.

Conclusion

The *Silvae* rarely describe emotional friendships between equals. *Amicitia* typically means patronage in this world, however indirectly it is figured.³⁹ One notable exception is the conclusion of *Silvae* 2.2, the delicate praise of the conjugal love between Pollius and Polla in their Epicurean retreat at Surrentum, where "hallowed hope keeps chaste friendship's laws" (*sanctusque pudicae / servat amicitiae leges amor*, Stat. *Silv.* 2.3.144–5).⁴⁰ The *fid-* root

does not occur in this poem: its only reference to Pollius occurs in the dedication of Book 3, describing his faithful allegiance to peace and quiet.⁴¹ Nor does Statius apply *fides* to the rare examples of friendship between equals elsewhere in the *Silvae*. The term has been reserved for the hierarchical world of the slave, the freedman, the wife, and the loyal subject of an autocratic emperor. Even features of the natural world must celebrate their subordination to the emperor, such as the river Volturnus, which claims to be pleased with its *servitus* (*Silv.* 4.3.81).⁴²

One essential contrast between the representation of *fides* in the *Silvae* and in the prose accounts of the exemplary tradition is between a peaceful world and a world in conflict. The implication for the gentle world of the *Silvae* is that these extraordinary slaves, dependants, and spouses choose to display affection and solicitude for exceptional masters even in ordinary circumstances. Statius' idealized world has no place for the actual testing of the subordinate's *fides*, as in Tacitus' *Histories* or Valerius Maximus' collection of examples. In his encomiastic context, Statius can only imagine the possibility of displaying *fides in extremis*. These include his wife Claudia's hypothetical braving of purely mythological hazards to demonstrate her *fides* to her husband (*Silv.* 3.5.44–51) or (on the more mundane level) Ursus' hypothetical equanimity, were he to endure property loss rather than the loss of his beloved Philetos (*Silv.* 2.6.60–70). The *Silvae* accordingly substitutes the fantasy of the subordinate's voluntarily supplied affection, service, and love.

I close with a very brief contrast with Claudian's use of *fides* language. At the close of the fourth century, the court poet wrote panegyric under the influence of Statius' *Silvae* for the general Stilicho and his emperor Honorius. As Alan Cameron's classic study demonstrates, both figures were far more insecure in their positions than the emperor Domitian.⁴³ Claudian's panegyrics feature a similar congeries of appeals to the exemplary *fides* of loyal subordinates, but two situations that Statius simply could not have written about prove how far the conventions of exemplarity can be extended. First, Claudian praises the loyalty of the barbarian forces on whom the Roman military increasingly depended, especially in situations where rival warlords clearly were able to sway their loyalties. Claudian's panegyric for Stilicho begins with praise of his loyal father and his barbarian troops: "Had he done nothing of note, had he in loyalty to Valens never led to battle those yellow-haired companies, yet to be the father of Stilicho would have spread abroad his fame" (*si nihil egisset clarum nec fida Valenti / dextera duxisset rutilantes crinibus alas, / sufficeret natus Stilicho*, Claud. *Stil.* 1.36–8; trans. Platnauer).

The fact that these troops were not in fact fully loyal when ordered to pursue Alaric's Goths in 395 led Claudian to substitute a convenient fiction.

In the poet's fantasy narrative, Rufinus manipulated the emperor Arcadius to order Stilicho to dismiss them. Claudian has Stilicho tell his men: "Leave me, my former allies, faithful band of youths" (*vos fida iuventus / ite, mei quondam socii*, Claud. Ruf. 2.250–1). For their part, the troops are made to complain "we are betrayed" (*tradimur*, Claud. Ruf. 2.261). Cameron pointed out the many intrinsic improbabilities in Claudian's account of the campaign.⁴⁴ Claudian elsewhere admits to ill-feeling between Stilicho's conjoined eastern and western armies (*Gild.* 293–301), but here he hyperbolically presents them as a single unit joined in body and soul: "Why do you divide battle-lines of one blood, eagles long since of one heart? We are an indivisible and conjoined body" (*quid consanguineas acies, quid dividis olim / concordēs aquilas? Non dissociabile corpus / coniunctumque sumus*, Claud. Ruf. 2.237–9). As Cameron observes, the poet similarly "protests a shade too much" in recalling this event in the panegyric of Stilicho: "You prefer to reinforce an enemy with strength rather than to betray *fides*" (*hostem muniri robore mavis / quam peccare fidem*, Stil. 2.96–7).⁴⁵ Stilicho faced multiple loyalty challenges: among other problems, Zosimus represents the Goths as undisciplined in general,⁴⁶ and Stilicho could not be certain that his Gothic troops would fight against Alaric. We may note the contrast with Statius, who claims on more than one occasion in the *Silvae* that Domitian's troops are loyal to him (this chapter has already discussed *Silv.* 3.3.115–17 and 5.1.94). These reminders of military *fides* were necessary after the war of AD 69 and the revolt of Saturninus in 89 and were evidently trustworthy assertions. Domitian would be assassinated by his household, not by revolting troops as in the case of Galba. (In hindsight, Statius' insistence that the same *fides* undergirds familial and imperial loyalty appears ironically naive in its failure to predict the true risk to his emperor.) Claudian's fictions of *fides* from the emperor's soldiers come from a world that could only dream of the domestic tranquillity of the *Silvae*.

A situation even less familiar to a Flavian panegyrist occurs in several of the panegyrics for Stilicho. Theodosius had entrusted his minor son Honorius to Stilicho, who served as regent while he was still underage. In theory, Theodosius had entrusted his son Arcadius to Stilicho as well, which is why Claudian refers to sons in the plural, but the regent had little control of the eastern empire. Claudian on several occasions praises Stilicho for his *fides* to the deceased emperor in fulfilling his extraordinary trust.⁴⁷ Centuries of panegyric on the monarch who rules with concern for his subjects rather than thought for his own profit inform this fantasy of a modest and self-effacing regent:⁴⁸ "Just and most faithful does Fame account those who, though they might deny a trust, have chosen rather to fulfil it, unpolluted by greed of gain" (*iustos nimumque fideles / fama*

putat, qui, cum possint commissa negare, / maluerint nullo violati reddere quaestu, *Stil.* 2.55–7; trans. Platnauer). Through the rhetoric of *fides*, Claudian made the true ruler of the western empire appear like a loyal, devoted subordinate. Statius could only have wished for such an opportunity for paradox.

NOTES

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- 1 Clark’s 2007a: 7–8 observations on *virtus* pertain equally well to *fides* or any other popular virtue:

As historians we often find ourselves obliged to use shorthands such as “the Roman people” or “the Romans,” but we should only ever do so with some awareness of the myriad of individuals, and of the complex individual thoughts and actions that make up such groups. Ideas, including ideas about *virtus*, were part of what we might term Roman cultural identity – an aspect of Roman-ness that tends to be given less attention than it deserves. The possibility that one or more Romans might have held different, less positive views about the connection between *virtus* and Romans than did Nepos does not of course in itself devalue such generalizations. My point is rather that it is precisely the discussions and claims about, and interactions over, *virtus*, of various types and by different individuals and groups, that together make up the connection between “Romans” and *virtus*. Such interactions took place in various contexts, and such claims very much included those of people holding a range of alternative views. Naturally, such interactions and discussions were in reality very far from equivalent in terms of their effective force in actually shaping public dialogue, but it is the sum-total of these interactions, many of which are now lost to us, that would give a full picture of that dialogue.

For aspects of *fides* in Statius’ epic works, see the chapters by Augoustakis and Keith on the *Thebaid* and the chapter by Kozák on the *Achilleid* in this volume.

- 2 For more on Tacitus’ exploration of *fides* in the *Histories*, see Bartera in this volume.
- 3 For Domitian’s execution of his own imperial freedmen, see, e.g., Suet. *Dom.* 14.4; for his execution of senators, see, e.g., Suet. *Dom.* 10.2–4, Cass. Dio 67.13–14. See also Dészpa 2016. For divorce, see Treggiari 1991: 435–82.

- 4 See Rühl 2015 and Nauta 2002. Henderson 2007: 245 dubs Statius "the poet of the interface."
- 5 Chinn 2008; Roche 2011.
- 6 For discussion of Statius' *pueri delicati*, see, most recently, Laes 2010. For recent studies of *Silvae* 2.1, see Asso 2010 and Bernstein 2005.
- 7 See Bernstein 2005 for discussion of the connection between Statius' praise of slaves' beauty and their exchange value.
- 8 An anonymous reader suggests that Ursus's name ("bear") may suggest further hunting imagery; see Newlands 2011 *ad Silv.* 2.6.19.
- 9 For Acoetes, see *Silv.* 2.1.93 (*fidus pugnas spectabat Acoetes*, "faithful Acoetes observed the combats") and *Virg. A.* 11.30–3, 85–7.
- 10 For Melior's *pietas*, see *Silv.* 2.1.96 (*altricum victas pietate parentes*, "nurturers' dutifulness has beaten that of birth parents").
- 11 See Lotito 1974–5. On the imperial household, see Weaver 1972.
- 12 Rühl 2006: 162–80 discusses the occasions of both poems as examples of Statius' "instrumentalization of grief."
- 13 *Stat. Silv.* 3.3.85–105, 138–45; see Nauta 2002: 229–33.
- 14 *Summa deum, Pietas* (*Stat. Silv.* 3.3.1), *pios fletus* (7). Cf. also *macte pio gemitu* ("hail to your dutiful mourning," 31), *piam ... domum* ("a dutiful house," 85). See Hulls 2011 for a discussion of *pietas* in this poem.
- 15 For reproduction as an obligation, see *Silv.* 2.1.87 (*natos genuisse necesse est*, "it is an obligation to produce children").
- 16 *Stat. Silv.* 3.3.115–17: *fascēs summamque curulem / frater et Ausonios enses mandataque fidus / signa tulit* ("her brother bore the rods and the highest curule chair, faithfully commanding Ausonian swords and entrusted standards").
- 17 Nauta 2002: 233–4.
- 18 See Weaver 1994: 338 and Gibson 2006: 99–100 on *Silv.* 5.1.53–4.
- 19 *Silv.* 5 *praef.*: *omnibus affectibus prosequenda sunt bona exempla, cum publice prosint* ("Good examples should be unreservedly honoured since they are for the public benefit."). The incomplete preface to the fifth book only discusses the first poem.
- 20 *Stat. Silv.* 5.1.76–9: *vidit quippe pii iuvenis navamque quietem / intactamque fidem succinctaque pectora curis / et vigiles sensus et digna evolvere tantas / sobria corda vices*.
- 21 A freedman of the imperial house similarly commemorated his wife's *fides*: *ILS* 1646. Gibson's note suggests that *hilaris* means that Priscilla was "both moral and pleasant."
- 22 Hardie 1983: 185–7.
- 23 Gibson 2006: 74–5.

- 24 *Silv.* 5.1.154–5: *quid probitas aut casta fides, quid numina prosunt / culta deum?* (“What avails probity or chaste loyalty or worship of gods’ deity?”) Fortune is *infida levisque* (“faithless and light,” *Silv.* 5.1.143).
- 25 We may contrast the braver decisions made by Lucan’s widow, Polla Argentaria (praised in *Silv.* 2.7), and Seneca’s widow, Paulina, to stay alive despite the danger of association with their condemned courtier husbands.
- 26 For marital *fides*, see Treggiari 1991: 191–9, 258–9, although she chooses not to “linger on the effusions of Statius” (258). See also Freyburger 1986: 167–76, as well as Ginsberg in this volume on [Sen.] *Oct.* 547.
- 27 Epigraphic examples of faithful wives include *CLE* 560 (*fidelis ... marito*), 959 (*fida viro*), and *CIL* VI 37317. Faithful husbands include *CLE* 1307 (*fidelis maritus*), *CIL* V 1142, V 7655, VI 6208, and VI 11195.
- 28 Contrast the Tibullan mistress *quae fida fuit nulli* (“who was faithful to no man,” 1.6.77) with the ideal wife: *uxoris fidos optabis amores* (“you will wish for a wife’s faithful love,” *Tib.* 2.2.11). The elegists protest about their *fides*: *tum flebit, cum in me senserit esse fidem* (“then she will cry, when she senses there is loyalty in me,” *Prop.* 2.17.18).
- 29 Henderson 2007.
- 30 Newlands 2012: 136–59.
- 31 McCarter 2012.
- 32 Travel in fact becomes a theme of *Silvae* 4: the book includes an encomium of the *Via Domitiana* (*Silv.* 4.3). Other examples include *Silv.* 4.4, where Statius’ narrator orders his poem to run down to Naples, with part of its journey on the *Via Domitiana*; *Silv.* 4.5 celebrates Septimius’ journey as an infant from Lepcis to Rome; *Silv.* 4.6 recounts the peregrinations of Vindex’s statuette of Hercules.
- 33 *Stat. Silv.* 3.5.81–8: *has ego te sedes (nam nec mihi barbara Thrace / nec Libye natale solum) transferre laboro, / quas et mollis hiems et frigida temperat aestas, / quas imbelle fretum torpentibus alluit undis. / pax secure locis et desidis otia vitae / et numquam turbata quies somnique peracti. / nulla foro rabies aut strictae in iurgia leges: / morum iura viris, solum et sine fascibus aequum* (“This is the dwelling place (for I was not born in barbarous Thrace or Libya) to which I am trying to bring you, tempered by mild winter and cool summer, washed by the lazy waves of an unwarlike sea. Peace secure is there, the leisure of a quiet life, tranquility undisturbed, sleep that runs its course. No madness in the Forum, no laws unsheathed for brawling. Our men are ruled only by manners and right that needs no rods.”) For discussion, see McCarter 2012: 458.
- 34 For the “Odyssean” narrative of *Silvae* 3.5, see Vessey 1977. Laguna’s note (1992: 368) observes that Aegiale, wife of Diomedes, “no es precisamente un *exemplum* de *fides* conyugal”; cf. *Ov. Ibis* 349–50: *nec tibi contingat matrona pudicior illa, / qua potuit Tydeus erubuisse nuru* (“nor may your mother be

more chaste than the woman Tydeus could have blushed to have as a daughter-in-law"). Aphrodite used her as an instrument of revenge on Diomedes for wounding her; both Ovid and Virgil include oblique allusions to the story (Ov. *Met.* 14.476–9; Virg. *A.* 11.269; see *New Pauly* s.v. "Aegialea"). Laguna accordingly suggests that Statius only wishes to emphasize Aegiale's grief during her abandonment, as emphasized by Homer (*Il.* 5.412–15), not the sequel. See Laguna's note for alternative identifications of Meliboea.

- 35 See Laguna's note (1992: 365–70) to Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.44–51 and Laguna 1994. To Laguna's list we might add Prop. 3.12.23–38, consoling a young husband departing for campaign that the beloved wife he left at home will be as faithful as Penelope.
- 36 See also Ov. *Trist.* 5.5.51–8, 5.14.35–40, and *Pont.* 3.1.105–12.
- 37 See Bernstein 2007; Gibson 2006: 177; and Nauta 2002: 307. For the family in Statius' works, see Bernstein 2015.
- 38 Zeiner 2005: 203–4.
- 39 Coffee 2015.
- 40 For discussion of the poem's philosophical background, see Nisbet 1978.
- 41 Stat. *Silv.* 3. *praef.*: *Polli dulcissime et hac cui tam fideliter inhaeres quiete dignissime* ("dearest Pollius, most deserving of the tranquility to which you so faithfully cling").
- 42 See *Silv.* 4.3.67–94 and discussion in Smolenaars 2006: 229–34. Coleman's note observes that "Volturnus' gratitude is particularly flattering to Domitian but is paralleled by the behaviour of other natural features," such as the Araxes (*Silv.* 1.4.79).
- 43 Cameron 1970.
- 44 Cameron 1970: 159–68. See also *Ruf.* 2.101–19 with Dewar 2003.
- 45 Cameron 1970: 166.
- 46 Cameron 1970: 164.
- 47 Praise of Stilicho's *fides*: *egregiae pacis fidissime custos* ("most loyal guardian of outstanding peace," Claud. *Hon. Nupt.* 333); *hunc solum memorem solumque fidelem / experior* ("I find him the only one who remembers, the only one who is loyal," *Gild.* 305–6).
- 48 For Claudian's use of the tradition of Pliny's *Panegyricus*, see Ware 2013. Note in particular her observation that, "even when Honorius is of age, the poet never allows him to become a reigning emperor. Instead, he becomes a god, one who protects the empire with his *numen*, leaving the practicalities of government to the loyal Stilicho – Stilicho who replaces Theodosius as the epic hero, the *unus homo* who can reign" (315). Also, Ware 2012: 51–2, 81–8.

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PART II

Fides: Flavian Myth

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Faith in Fate: Plot, Gods, and Metapoetic Morality in Valerius Flaccus

HELEN LOVATT

Higher powers in narrative fiction have a disturbing tendency to approximate toward the author function.¹ If fate is the effect of the decisions of the powerful, it is worth remembering that, in any narrative world, ultimate power resides with the author.² But the epic poet derives authority at least partly from being part of a mythological tradition: what happens when the author and the tradition diverge? There is also a close relationship between political and literary power and authority: if epic underpins imperial power, what are the implications for epic's relationship to its wider cultural and political context when epic authority is undermined? The concept of faithfulness is often used by Valerius Flaccus to negotiate these questions of authority, tradition, and narrative power: in the manner of an Alexandrian footnote, he marks a moment of intertextuality with a word denoting faith, particularly tendentious adaptations of the tradition, or what Andrew Zissos calls "negative allusion" – that is, a deliberate reference to what the poet has chosen not to say.³ Phrases like *nec vana fides* are frequently used to mark the poet's self-conscious posture of humility, and especially the complex relationship of narrator and gods. Valerius Flaccus frequently uses ideas of faith (*fides*) and confidence (*fiducia*) to reflect on authorial power, intertextual belatedness, and the complexity of myth.

This chapter examines examples of this reflection and asks how met-literary faith fits in with morality, intertextuality, and trust in the gods. It begins by examining the phrase *nec vana fides* in situations related to prophecy and belief in the gods, including the prophetic contest of Mopsus and Idmon, and Valerius' invocation of Bacchus at Callirhoe. The second

section explores ideas of faith at Lemnos, used by Venus and in Hypsipyle's tour of Lemnos' divine landscape. The rhetoric of faith often accompanies deception. Faith is also used to reflect on the difficulties of working with (and living in) a traditional narrative: gods who cannot change the outcome of the story, and men whose trust in gods (and themselves) is misplaced. The section on the helmsman also investigates the connection between faith and narrative. The second half of the chapter focuses mainly on Jason and Medea, examining Jason's use of the rhetoric of faith and trust, and Medea's metaliterary trust in and rejection of her own past (literary and familial), in her negotiations with Aeetes, the dragon scene, the marriage scene, and the final quarrel between Jason and Medea.⁴ This examination of the language of metaliterary faith in Valerius Flaccus sets out an important nexus of ideas about intertextuality, authority, myth, and power that is extendable not just to other Latin epics but also to the use of *fides* in other mythological genres. The particular prominence of this language in Valerius' Flavian *Argonautica* suggests that belatedness and political anxieties combine to make metaliterary *fides* a peculiar concern of Flavian epic.

Nec Vana Fides: Living Up to the Story

The phrase *nec vana fides* is used to tag stories, statements, or ideas that are problematic or difficult to believe. In the catalogue of Valerius' *Argonautica* 1, the prophet Mopsus is introduced with a tendentious genealogy, labelled by the phrase *fides non vana: hic vates Phoebique fides non vana parentis / Mopsus* ("Here the seer Mopsus, not empty proof of the paternity of Phoebus," 1.383–4). This introduction of Mopsus is tendentious on a number of levels.⁵ First, most versions of the Argonautic myth seem to have had only one seer, but Valerius follows Apollonius in combining two traditions, with his two seers. It is in Mopsus' parentage that Valerius moves away from Apollonius, who refers to him as Ἀμπυκίδης ("son of Ampycus," A. R. 1.1083). Zissos demonstrates that, by claiming that Apollo is his father, Valerius conflates this Mopsus with Mopsus the son of Apollo and Manto. For Valerius, Mopsus' prophetic skill itself proves his paternity and becomes a way of praising him – except that in most versions he is not the son of Apollo. And, if he is not the son of Apollo, should this undermine our belief in his ability as a prophet? Does this self-awareness prove Valerius' own skill as a *vates*, his *doctrina*, as suggested by Zissos?⁶ Or does it constitute a knowing warning to be wary of the claims of both prophets and poets? This playful reference puts both literal and poetic paternity under pressure. Prophets represent the poet's connection to the gods; by undermining Mopsus' claim to authority, Valerius also makes his own commitment to the authority of the tradition open to challenge.⁷

The question of credibility, accuracy, and proof is often raised for prophecies, as James O'Hara shows for the *si non vana* motif.⁸ The phrase *si qua fides* is frequent in prose, especially legal speeches and declamations.⁹ *Nec vana fides* was made famous by Dido in *Aeneid* 4, when she sings the praises of Aeneas to Anna at the beginning of the book:

credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum.
degeneres animos timor arguit. heu, quibus ille
iactatus fatis! quae bella exhausta canebat! (Virg. A. 4.12–14)

I believe indeed, nor is my faith empty, that his race is of the gods.
Fear sharpens degenerate minds. Alas, by what fates
has he been tossed! What wars that drained him he is used to sing!

Dido's love for Aeneas is founded on her belief in his divine ancestry and the stories he has told, his epic fame.¹⁰ But her trust in him is ultimately misplaced: Virgil never implies that Aeneas' stories are untrue, but the truth of his epic fame will not lead to his faithfulness in other respects.¹¹ Aeneas will allow Dido to infer a pledge of faith, to which he will not hold.¹² His divine ancestry and his epic fame are in fact responsible for his untrustworthiness: the gods, including Venus, first make the affair happen and then make him leave.¹³ Dido's faith is both empty and not empty. Virgil may well already be signalling with the phrase *nec vana fides* the existence of different traditions about Aeneas' past, which might undermine Aeneas' authority and credibility as a narrator and as a lover. Before Valerius, Ovid had already brought out these ambiguous possibilities in Virgil, in *Heroides* 7 (*fidem* in line 10 joins together sailing and promises as facilitated by the wind).¹⁴ Morality and literary faithfulness are mutually implicated in Latin poetry, and Valerius draws on this tradition, enriching it and taking it to another level.¹⁵ Tellingly, the phrase *nec vana fides* is more common in Valerius than in his epic predecessors and contemporaries.¹⁶ In particular, Valerius links problems of *fides* with the difficulties of understanding and engaging with epic gods. We can see this in another clearly metapoetic use of *nec vana fides* near the beginning of Book 5 of the Flavian *Argonautica*, arguably the central point of the poem, just after the helmsman has been replaced, and just before Fama goes as a messenger to the underworld to arrange for Sthenelus to appear to them as he does in Apollonius (2.911–29), thus making sure the narrative continues in its Apollonian path:

inde premente noto tristes Acherusidos oras
praeterit et festa vulgatam nocte Lyaei
Callirhoen, nec vana fides: his Bacchus in undis

abluit Eoo rorantes sanguine thyrsos.
 illum post acies rubrique novissima claustra
 aequoris hic resides thiasos, hic aera moventem
 udaeque pampinea nequentem cornua vitta
 nunc etiam meministis, aquae, Boeotia qualem
 Thyias et infelix cuperet vidisse Cithaeron.

(V. Fl. 5.73–81)

From there with the South wind pressing she passes the grim Acherusian shores and Callirhoe commonly known for the celebratory night of Lyaeus. Nor is this empty faith: Bacchus in these waters washed his wands bedewed with Eastern blood. Him, after the battle and the newest boundaries of the Red Sea, here stirring up his sluggish followers and their brass, binding his moist horns with fillets of vine now still you remember him, waters, such as the Boeotian maenad and unfortunate Cithaeron would have longed to have seen.

Here a divinity is imagined as made manifest through a story about the landscape. At line 75 Liberman prints *Callichoron*, following Apollonius and editors of Valerius from 1498 onwards, but a deliberately tendentious change of name to *Callirhoen* would augment the irony of both *vulgatam* and *nec vana fides*, and account for their otherwise rather puzzling presence, so I follow Wijsman here.¹⁷ The incongruity with the aetiological explanation is appropriately Valerian. If we accept the text in the manuscripts, Valerius here plays on the name that he has altered from Apollonius (2.899–911), emphasizing its difference with both *vulgatam* and *nec vana fides*, but then follows Apollonius in his aetiological explanation, which no longer fits the name.¹⁸ The way Valerius tells it shows a self-consciously ironic narrative strategy: he first tells us the story as a rumour, then proves it by restating it as the word of the primary narrator. His witnesses are the waters themselves, addressed in an apostrophe. Bacchus can function as a sort of super-Argonaut, exploring further, achieving more, actually becoming a god;¹⁹ his presence also evokes the tragic side of the *Argonautica*. The final mention of Agave and the Bacchae emphasizes his contrasting benevolence here, but also the potential for divine destruction. Further, Ariadne lurks as an alternative version of Medea, rescued and transformed by Bacchus.²⁰ We can see in these two examples that faith in connections to other texts and myths is juxtaposed with faith in gods, causation, and accounts of religious phenomena, but that credibility is given ostentatiously circular justification.

Lemnian Faith: Telling Stories in Lemnos

The third example of *nec vana fides* is slightly different, but is still closely related to intertextuality, tendentious tradition, the figure of Fama, deception, and violence. Venus has sent Fama to stir up violence on Lemnos, and she has appeared to various Lemnian women, disguised as one of them.²¹

dolor iraque surgit,
obvia quaeque eadem traditque auditque neque ulli
vana fides. (V. Fl. 2.165–7)

Grief and anger rises,
and each as they meet passes on and hears the same things nor is there
empty faith for any.

Emma Buckley interprets the key phrase *neque ulli / vana fides* as both denial and affirmation, depending on whether we supply *fit* or *videtur*: trust in Fama, clearly misplaced here, could either *seem* or actually *be* unfounded. She calls this “a typically Valerian ellipsis that presses the textuality of the moment.”²² It is also typical of the metapoetic uses of *fides* in Valerius Flaccus. Venus and Fama drive the plot to its tragic conclusion, and any faith in divine benevolence and truth is definitively misplaced, yet divine sponsorship of stories creates inevitable belief among mortal characters. Again, *nec vana fides* calls attention to the treacherous uncertainty of both gods and storytelling.

The Argonauts are not straightforwardly under threat from the Lemnians, at least in this version, but they are used and deceived: Hypsipyle, despite playing the role of Aeneas complete with *pietas* and rescued father, is not without her economies with the truth. Another moment of Lemnian faith occurs when Hypsipyle is showing Jason the cave of Vulcan, a less convincing Evander to his less convincing Aeneas:

“haec antra videtis
Vulcanique” ait “ecce domos: date vina precesque.
forsitan hoc factum taceat²³ iam fulmen in antro;
nox dabit ipsa fidem clausae cum murmura flammae,
hospes, et incussae sonitum mirabere massae.”
moenia tum viresque loci veteresque parentum
iactat opes. (V. Fl. 2.335–41)

“You see this cave;
behold the home of Vulcan: give wine and prayers.

Perhaps in this very cave a thunderbolt just made lies silent;
night itself will give faith, guest, when you will marvel at the roar
 of enclosed flames and the sound of hammered ore.”
 Then she boasts of the walls and the strength of the place and
 the ancient wealth of her ancestors.

Again the landscape supposedly proves the reality of a story about the gods: Hypsipyle implies that Jason could see the thunderbolt if only he could go in, but that sounds at night will show the truth of her story. In practice, sounds must be interpreted, and there are many other possible explanations for banging that might not involve blacksmiths hammering out divine thunderbolts. Valerius plays with the idea of multiple mythical explanations without actually giving them to us and puts this tendentious claim into the mouth of a notoriously unreliable narrator.²⁴ The juxtaposition with Hypsipyle’s boasts about her homeland, in which we do not find out the one key fact about their past, underlines her lack of faith. Yet unreliable internal narrators make the same moves as the external narrator, revealing a fundamental uneasiness in Valerius’ relationship both with his own poetry and the epic genre.²⁵

Gods Behaving Sadly: Faith in Failing

When the gods use the language of faith, they also desire to change the plot. The epic narrator requires his readers to accept his omniscience, particularly in his representation of the gods. When gods in Valerius talk about faith, trust, and confidence, it is often in the face of their own powerlessness. For instance, Juno has to accept the presence of Hercules as part of the Argonautic expedition, even though she refuses to trust him:

quos talibus amens
 insequitur solitosque novat Saturnia questus:
 “o utinam Graiae rueret non omne iuventae
in nova fata decus nostrique Eurystheos haec nunc
 iussa forent. imbrem et tenebras saevumque tridentem
 iamiam ego et inviti torsissem coniugis ignem.
 nunc quoque nec socium nostrae columenve carinae
 esse velim Herculeis nec me umquam fidere fas sit
 auxiliis comiti et tantum debere superbo.”

(V. Fl. 1.111–19)

Madly Saturnia pursues them
 with such words and renews her accustomed complaints:
 “O would that the whole glory of Greek youth would not

rush into a new fate and these would not now be the orders
of my Eurystheus. Already I would have hurled storm and darkness
the savage trident and the fire of my unwilling spouse.
Now also I would not want the ally and protector of my ship
to be Herculean nor is it right for me ever to trust
in the help of such a companion or to trust anything so great to his pride."

Juno here renews her customary complaints about Hercules, by imitating her Virgilian forebear. The emphasis on novelty in both the speech itself and its framing brings out Juno's traditional moves. She will later work to evict Hercules through the abduction of Hylas.²⁶ In many respects, Juno is the prime mover of the *Argonautica*.²⁷ But Valerius has a Virgilian Jupiter to form an alternative centre of power, and Valerius here draws attention to his own innovation. Apollonius does not make Juno deliberately cause the loss of Heracles, and he himself may have tendentiously included Heracles, although earlier sources may not have done.²⁸ Heracles has been read as too great a hero for the *Argo* to bear;²⁹ but Valerius uses Hercules to make the expedition sublime.³⁰ Valerius' whole-hearted embrace of Hercules in the narrative is reflected in Juno's refusal to trust, which marks the anxiety of the poet-narrator as he pushes against the acceptable bounds of myth and intertextuality.

Further, when Boreas stirs up a storm, disgusted by the Argonauts' confidence in the ship at 1.597–607, he asks permission of Aeolus because of men trusting in ships:³¹

hinc animi structaeque viris fiducia puppis,
quod Borean sub rege vident. da mergere Graios
insanamque ratem! nil me mea pignora tangunt.
tantum hominum compesce minas dum litora iuxta
Thessala necdum aliae viderunt carbasa terrae. (V. Fl. 1.603–7)

From this comes confidence in courage and in a ship built by men,
the fact that they see Boreas under a king. Grant me to sink the Greeks
and their insane vessel! My offspring do not touch me at all.
Only crush the threats of men while they are next to the
Thessalian shore and they do not yet see sails from other lands.

This is another Virgilian intrusion into the text. Boreas here plays Juno in stirring up the storm, with an even greater cosmic motivation: to stop all sailing of men. But Valerius underlines the paradoxical nature of this intrusion when the god mentions and dismisses his affection for his sons. There

should not be a storm, and he should not be causing it, since his sons are on board, and he did not create a storm in the previous tradition. But working against Jupiter's world plan trumps his connection with mortals.

In contrast, Neptune joins a long line of epic gods unable to protect their offspring, when he laments the coming fate of Amycus (4.114–32). He phrases this in terms of trust and confidence, that Amycus should no longer trust in him:

nec tibi nunc uirtus aut det fiducia nostri,
 nate, animos opibusque ultra ne crede paternis.
 iam iam aliae vires maioraque sanguine nostro
 vincunt fata Iovis, potior cui cura suorum est. (V. Fl. 4.124–7)

May manliness and confidence in me now not grant
 courage and may you trust your father's help no further.
 Now already other strength and the fate of Jupiter greater
 than our blood conquers, for whom care of his own is more powerful.

We would not have expected Amycus to trust in Neptune in any case, because this aspect of the story is added by Valerius and is not present in Apollonius. Neptune's inability to compete with Jupiter, who can be identified with both fate and the recognized plot, highlights Valerius' inability to change the major outcome of the Argonautic episodes, while he intervenes in the surrounding superstructure.³² Gods, then, talk about faith, confidence, and trust when the author struggles against the confines of the mythic tradition.

The Mortal Rhetoric of Faith: Trust in Me

Jason displays a superb ambivalence toward both faith and the use of the rhetoric of fate. His relationship with the gods is explored in the language of faith used in his vision of the oak of Dodona in Book 1, as he sleeps after bidding farewell to his parents:

“Dodonida quercum
 Chaoniiue vides famulam Iovis. aequora tecum 308
 ingredior nec fatidicis avellere silvis 303
 me nisi promisso potuit Saturnia caelo.
 tempus adest: age rumpe moras, dumque aequore toto 305
 currimus incertus si nubila duxerit aether,
 iam nunc mitte metus fidens superisque mihique.”

dixerat. ille pavens laeto quamquam omine divum	309
prosiluit stratis.	310 (V. Fl. 1.302–10)

"The Dodonian oak

servant of Chaonian Jove you see. I attack the seas
with you nor could Saturnia tear me from the fate-telling
woods if heaven had not been promised.
The time is here: come, break delays, and while we run
through the whole sea, uncertain if the aether will lead the clouds,
now, now, send fear away, trusting in the gods and me.”
It had spoken. He, panicking despite the joyful omen from the gods,
jumped out of his bed.

This scene is a Valerian addition to the narrative but evokes both Virgil's Aeneas and Apollonius' Jason. In particular, Aeneas is made to leave Carthage by the urgency of his second vision of Mercury (A. 4.554–83), which leads to the suicide of Dido and, ultimately, the Punic wars. Apollonius' Jason has a similar vision of the heroines when the Argonauts are stranded in the Libyan desert, which allows them to escape (A. R. 4.1305–32). The consequence of Valerius' Jason trusting this dream is that he kick-starts the Argonautic mission. He also abandons his parents, who will perform a katabasis on his behalf and, by dying, will face the wrath of Pelias in his place. Jason would feel less confident about the advice of his divine sponsors if he were aware of its consequences. This dream, then, resembles the incomplete prophecies in the *Aeneid* connected by O'Hara with the *si non vana* motif. Jason's imperfect grasp of the plot ahead gives him empty confidence in his own mission.³³ The dream itself serves only to bring out the potentially malevolent effects of even apparently positive divine interventions, complications introduced by Valerius.

Often, as with Apollonius' Jason, Valerius' Jason shows a lack of faith in the gods, which might reflect Valerius' lack of faith in his own narrative choices, or the complexity of the Argonautic myth. When Jason asks Phineus for a prophecy, he questions whether gods care about mortals:³⁴

omnis adhuc sors laeta quidem nec numine vano,
siqua fides curae superum, tantum aequor adorti
tendimus: ipsa mihi puppem Iovis optima proles
instituit dedit et socios Saturnia reges.
fidere mens sed nostra nequit, quantumque propinquit
Phasis et ille operum summus labor, hoc magis angunt
proxima nec vates sat iam mihi Mopsus et Idmon. (V. Fl. 4.540–6)

Still all lots are happy and indeed not through empty divine power,
if there is any faith in the care of the gods, do we stretch out into
 such a great sea: the best child of Jove set up this ship for me
 herself, and Juno gave me kings for allies.
 But my mind is unable to trust and the nearer Phasis
 approaches and that highest task of our toils, so much more
 proximity tortures nor are Mopsus and Idmon enough for me as prophets.

This hint of an Epicurean tendency is linked with the superfluity of prophetic characters in the Argonautic tradition, and particularly Apollonius.³⁵ Two prophets are not enough for Apollonius or Valerius' Jason, which comments on Phineus' function in Apollonius as a doublet of the poet-narrator, detailing what will happen in words that virtually duplicate the language of the narrator.³⁶ Nevertheless the most serious problems will be unanticipated, and Valerius' epic narrative, with its increased representation of the gods, never answers the question of whether the gods care about mortals or simply use them for their own ends.

If Jason sometimes appears ambivalent about prophecy and the gods, he himself, nevertheless, uses the rhetoric of faith in a similarly ambivalent way to achieve his own goals, and this is the main function of the language of faith in the second half of the poem. I include one example of this, in which Jason uses faith almost as a synonym of fate in his attempt to persuade Aeetes to simply give them the fleece:

si petere hoc saevi statuissem sanguine belli,
 Ossa dabat Pindusque rates quotque ante secuti
 inde nec audacem Bacchum nec Persea reges.
 sed me nuda fides sanctique potentia iusti
huc tulit ac medii sociatrix gratia Phrixi
 iamque tibi nostra geniti de stirpe nepotes.
 nec tamen aut Phrygios reges aut arva furentis
 Bebryciae spernendus adi: seu fraude petivit
 seu quis honore meos, sua reddita dona deumque
 nos genus atque ratem magnae sensere Minervae.

(V. Fl. 5.495–504)

If I had decided to seek this through the blood of savage war,
 Ossa and Pindus would have given ships and so many kings
 did not follow bold Bacchus then or Perseus.
 But naked faith brought me here and the power of sacred
 right and the welcome allegiance of shared Phrixus
 and now the descendents born to you from our stock.

Nevertheless, I did not seem to Phrygian kings or the fields
of raging Bebrycia a man who should be scorned: whether he sought
my response through trickery or honour, they found their own gifts repaid
and acknowledged us a race of the gods, our ship of great Minerva.

His trust in his own epic fate, as a potential Agamemnon, greater than Bacchus and Perseus, reveals his deceptive self-presentation. The truth is he does not have a thousand ships and cannot take the fleece by force. Rather, he is attempting to negotiate and is relying on his faith in his sponsoring gods. The fact that he has managed even to reach Colchis is supposed to substantiate this claim of power. So, Jason hopes, the story of Bebrycia will substantiate the Argonauts' divine heritage and sponsorship. Stories thus authenticate other stories, in a pyramid scheme of literary (and political) authenticity.

The epic fame of the Argonauts from the previous tradition seems already to be on their side when Lycus welcomes them to his court and proposes *certa fides* based on shared enmity and shared gods, fate and his faith in their reputation:

adproperat Lycus auditis laetatus Achivis
ac simul Aesoniden omnemque in regia turbam
tectatrahit modo Bebryciis praefixa tropaeis
mitis et in mediis effatur talia Graeis:
"haud temere est: fato divum reor ad mea vectos
litora uos, odium quibus atque eadem ira furentis
Bebryciae saevaque³⁷ pares de gente triumphi:
certa fides animis, idem quibus incidit hostis."

(V. Fl. 4.737–44)

Lycus approaches rejoicing in the Achaeans he has heard (of)
and straight away drags the son of Aeson and the whole crowd
into the royal palace fixed up with trophies from the Bebrycians,
and gently addresses such words in the midst of the Greeks:
"Not by chance it is, but by the fate of the gods I think that you
have been brought
to my shores, who have hatred and the same anger for raging
Bebrycia and equal triumphs over that savage race:
there is certain faith in our minds, in those who have faced the same enemy."

Lycus here emphasizes the role of fate in creating faith, and the way that fame creates a belief in both. But this faith does not function in other episodes: Cyzicus will be killed and Aeetes will not turn out to keep his promise,

despite his joint fight with the Argonauts against a common enemy. The use of the epithet *certa* serves only to underline that both Fate and faith are used as rhetorical tools and give no guarantee of anything.³⁸ Similarly the fact that Valerius has largely followed the expected path of the Argonautic myth is no guarantee that he will continue to do so, and the shock of the civil war in Book 6 must surely have undermined any certainty in the minds of the audience.

The Trustiest Helmsman

Narrative choice and physical direction are closely linked. So trust in the plot and faith in fate is exemplified by the use of *fidissima* to describe the helmsman. The trustworthiness of the helmsman is particularly under pressure because Erginus replaces Tiphys as helmsman after his death:

maesti omnes dubiique, ratem fidissima cuius
dextra regat; simul Ancaeus sollersque petebat
Nauplius. Erginum fato vocat ipsa monenti
quercus et ad tonsas victi rediere magistri. (V. Fl. 5.63–6)

All were sad and all doubtful, whose right hand would be most trustworthy
to guide the ship. Straightaway Ancaeus and crafty Nauplius
applied. Erginus the oak herself calls with fate
warning and the conquered masters return to their oars.

The helmsman is an image of the poet in his ability to guide the narrative, along with the ship, in the right direction.³⁹ Finding one's way is closely related to having a moral sense of direction and choosing to do the right thing. Fate and the oak supply Erginus. But this too is a tendentious adaptation of tradition. Apollonius has Ancaeus replace Tiphys, while Erginus and Nauplius (and Euphemus) are unsuccessful applicants (2.894–8). So is Erginus really the most trustworthy? Can we be sure that he actually did form the substitute? The act of substitution itself underlines the uncertainty of reworking myth.⁴⁰

Later Jason calls Erginus *fidissime rector* (most faithful steersman), as he agrees with his decision not to go back through the Clashing Rocks:

reddidit Aesonides: “et te, fidissime rector,
haud vani tetigere metus nec me ire recuso
longius et cunctis redeuntem ostendere terris.” (V. Fl. 8.197–9)

The son of Aeson replied: "And you, trustiest guide,
fear of empty things does not touch you and I do not refuse to go
further and show myself returning to all the lands."

This exchange occurs just after the narrator has told us that the rocks are neutralized, and Erginus has been misled by an empty fear (8.195–6). Further, in Apollonius, the authority for the return route comes from ancient Egypt and Sesostris via Argos (4.257–93), so Valerius is providing a different account and a different authority for his plan of action. The multiplicity of possible routes of return stands out in the complexity of the Argonautic myth, and Jason's image of himself on display to all lands emphasizes the artificiality of choosing the longest route, as if the journey of the Argonauts must always become longer and even more epic. Sadly, we do not know which route Valerius actually chose, but these lines emphasize his self-conscious play with faith and myth. Jason's trust in Erginus is misplaced, and Valerius is deviating from his most illustrious model.

Medea, Faith, and Intertextuality

Valerius' *Argonautica* is radically different from that of Apollonius, but is he ultimately faithful to an Apollonian aesthetic of ambiguity and elusiveness?⁴¹ In this section, I look at Colchian trustworthiness, especially that of Medea, to illuminate further Valerius' relationship with Apollonius and how ideas of metaliterary faith are used in the Flavian period.⁴² Aeetes is often described as faithless, and Valerius uses his own insertion of the civil war episode in Book 6 to play with the idea of Aeetes' deceptiveness.⁴³ In a moment already identified by Zissos as a negative allusion, Medea applies the language of deception to Aeetes in complaining that he waited until after they had fought together in the civil war before making his current demands on Jason:

cur tibi fallaces placuit coniungere dextras
tunc, pater, atque istis iuvenem non perdere monstis
protinus? ipsa etiam, fateor, tunc ipsa volebam. (V. Fl. 7.344–6)

Why did it please you then, father, to join deceptive
right hands and not destroy the young man immediately with those
monsters of yours? I myself, even, I confess, then I myself wanted that.

The insertion of the civil war episode has made Aeetes more clearly blameworthy: Jason has already done what he was asked to do, but Aeetes now

asks him to pay a higher price. Medea has more reason to help Jason and is irritated both with her father and her former self. Zissos points out that Medea's comment can be read as metapoetic.⁴⁴ But Medea's radical ambivalence mirrors that of Valerius: what was it that she wanted then, but implicitly does not want now? Friendship or destruction? Her words can be read one way by Aeetes and another way by us. Aeetes did not keep faith with the tradition, and that resulted in his failure to keep his promise; so Medea can keep faith with tradition by refusing to keep faith with him. Valerius then plays on a tension between literary and moral faith. Aeetes is characterized by faithlessness throughout the poem, by many different characters: Juno (5.289–90 and 6.429–32); Perses (6.21–3); Jason throughout his speech at 7.78–102.⁴⁵ Faithlessness is a theme of the Argonautic myth: from Pelias, to Jason, to Aeetes, to Medea, hardly anyone keeps their promises.⁴⁶ In the hands of Valerius Flaccus, this theme brings together myth, morality, and literary self-fashioning.

The language of faith resurfaces in Medea's long speech to the dragon that guards the fleece (8.95–108): the almost erotic connection between Medea and the dragon is a new element in the mix. In Apollonius, Jason has an unhealthy sensuous desire for the fleece itself; here Medea presents the dragon in the terms of a love relationship. The dragon is the *fidissima custos* ("most faithful guard," 8.75) of the fleece,⁴⁷ but faithful to her, or to the fleece? The fleece is the creature's *cura* (care/love, 8.76), but Medea also presents herself as faithful to the dragon: at 8.97, with a delightful oxymoron, she faithfully nourishes him with her own poisons (*nostris nutribam fida venenis*). Further irony, as she offers herself as surety that there will be no trickery (*quem metuis me stante dolum?* "what trick do you fear with me standing by?" 8.77). Valerius makes the dragon a precursor for or avatar of Apollonius' Absyrtus, who comes to be ambushed by Jason because he trusts Medea's trickery.⁴⁸ But the slippage between the dragon's love for the fleece and his love for Medea leads to imagery of herself as ex-lover: the phrase *non ego te ... talem ... videbam* ("I did not see you like that," 8.95), which begins her speech, suggests both epic lament, and love poetry. *Non ego te* at the beginning of a phrase is found at Catullus 64.221 in the lament of Aegeus for Theseus' presumed death and in the *Aeneid* (10.185, narratorial lament for Ligurus). But it is also a phrase used very frequently in love poetry – for instance, in Tibullus, Horace, and Ovid.⁴⁹ Further, at 8.102–4, Medea asks the snake to live out his old age "forgetful of me, I beg" (*immemor, oro, mei*, 103) and not pursuing her with his anger. This idea of the abandoned one lamenting in their old age is common to both love poetry and laments, particularly those for children. So the snake is both substitute parent and

substitute lover. Medea's speech mixes this imagery of faith and love with negative allusions and self-conscious irony. At 8.99 she is glad that she did not actually kill the snake: there certainly are versions in which the snake was killed, either by Jason or Medea (Pind. *Pyth.* 4.248 summarizes that Jason killed the snake by skill; at Eur. *Med.* 482, Medea herself claims the death of the dragon as one of her deeds). Here, of course, Valerius is following Apollonius in not killing the snake, but correcting Apollonius by giving Medea a strong motivation for keeping the snake alive. Similarly, the final line of this speech, *iamque omne nefas, iam, spero, peregi* ("and now I have done all crime, now, I hope, I have finished," 8.108), refers self-consciously and with dramatic irony to the tragic Medea, particularly echoing Sen. *Med.* 122 (*adeone credit omne consumptum nefas?* "Does he believe that all crime is completely used up?"), in which the language of belief/disbelief signals an intertextual relationship. Valerius is going a step further than Seneca (perhaps a step further backwards) by making Medea anticipate her crimes heaped on crimes, before she has even killed her brother, let alone her sons, and has not killed even the snake.

This section demonstrates how the language of faith continues to evoke literary tradition as well as morality and deliberate play on variations within the existing versions of the myth. The theme of deception and faithlessness is crucial to the Argonaut myth and especially to the Colchians and Medea.

Married in Good Faith?

Valerius equally deviates from the Apollonian version of the tradition by including a marriage ceremony on the island of Peuce before the confrontation with Apsyrtus, which is still brewing. In Apollonius, Jason and Medea do not consummate their relationship until they arrive in Phaeacia, when they learn that Alcinous will adjudicate between the claim of the Argonauts and that of the Colchians to Medea, depending on whether or not Jason and Medea are "married." Both Apollonius and Valerius begin their Peuce episodes with a description of the island (A. R. 4.309–11 ~ V. Fl. 8.216–18). It is here in Apollonius that Medea and Jason will ambush, betray, and kill Apsyrtus. Peuce thus appears to be transformed in the remaining text of Valerius from faith broken to faith guaranteed and promises kept. In both marriage episodes, the Argonauts rejoice at the proposed union (A. R. 4.1126–7 ~ V. Fl. 8.223). As with Dido and Aeneas, the wedding rituals are improvised and foreshadow disaster, as Mopsus foresees (8.247–51). The repetition of *promissam fidem* ("promised faith," 8.249) from 222 with *nec stare* ("that will not stand") inserted between the two words, underlines the inevitability

of the tragic future much more emphatically than in the wedding scene of Apollonius. The scene finishes with a self-conscious allusion to Apollonius. While the happy couple are reclining on the fleece, the ceremony is interrupted by the arrival of the Colchian fleet:

quis novus inceptos timor impediit hymenaeos
turbavitque toros et sacra calentia rupit? (V. Fl. 8.259–60)

What new fear hindered the wedding rituals that had been begun
and set the couches into disarray and broke the rites as they grew warm?

In Apollonius, the Argonauts worry that the ceremony might be interrupted and arm themselves accordingly (A. R. 4. 1155–60), while Valerius' wedding actually is interrupted. The image of novelty and rupture (*quis novus inceptos timor ... turbavit ... rupit*) evokes the intertextual infidelity of placing this scene here at all, while simultaneously reminding us that the imminent treachery against and murder of Absyrtus will spell inevitable destruction for the relationship of Jason and Medea. We see Valerius as fundamentally faithful in his faithlessness. His literary innovations are informed by a deep appreciation of the Apollonian aesthetic.

The Final Quarrel

The scene with the greatest density of faith words is the final quarrel between Jason and Medea at the very end of the extant poem. In Apollonius, Medea has no difficulty in persuading Jason to kill Absyrtus rather than abandoning her. The beginning of Valerius' episode is loaded with words of religious duty:

quamquam iura deum et sacri sibi conscia pacti
religio dulcisque movent primordia taedae ... (V. Fl. 8.401–2)

Although the laws of the gods and the self-aware binding
of the sacred vow and the first beginnings of sweet wedlock stir him ...

If Aeneas could fairly say that he had never actually married Dido, Jason certainly knows that he has married Medea and that the gods and oaths bind him. Nevertheless, he decides to follow the arguments of his fellow Argonauts. One significant difference from the *Aeneid* is that the Argonauts negotiate with Jason secretly, leaving Medea ignorant (8.405–7). Here the model of Dido and Aeneas intrudes on that of Apollonius' Medea and Jason. Like Dido, Medea is not easily deceived:

sed miser ut vanos, veros ita saepe timores
 versat amor fallique sinit nec virginis annos.
 ac prior ipsa dolos et quamlibet intima sensit
 non fidi iam signa viri nimiumque silentes
 una omnes. haud illa sui tamen immemor umquam
 nec subitis turbata minis prior occupat unum
 Aesoniden longeqque trahit, mox talibus inquit ... (V. Fl. 8.408–14)

But wretched love turns over fears, often empty indeed, but often true, and does not allow the girl despite her age to be deceived. But she herself first noticed the tricks and marked the intimate signs of a husband no longer faithful, and the men too silent all together. But she was never forgetful of herself nor disturbed by sudden threats, but first challenges the son of Aeson alone, and drawing him far apart, she soon begins with such words ...

While the frenzied activities of the Trojans give them away to Dido, the silence of the Argonauts tells Medea what is going on. The play on Medea's age (*virginis annos*) reminds us that she is both a young girl and an experienced character.⁵⁰ She knows the signs beforehand (*prior*) as if it has all happened before (twice, at least). The phrase *haud immemor sui* is ambiguous: on a surface reading, it implies that she holds onto her integrity and decisiveness, rather than losing her hold on the situation, as Dido does. However, it also functions like the *Medea nunc sum* of Seneca's Medea (*Med.* 910) to underline that she does not forget what role her character must play. Her speech too brings out these ironies: *liceat cognoscere tandem* ("it is allowed at last to recognize," 8.416) implies Jason's lateness and cowardice in not telling her beforehand what her previous incarnation already knew. Faithlessness and cowardice are inextricably combined, as the rhythmic repetition of *fortissima pubes* ("bravest young man," 8.415) and *fidissime coniunx* ("most faithful husband," 8.419) underlines. The *si*-clause that Medea uses to demand information (*si modo Peliacae non sum captiva carinae / nec dominos decepta sequor*, "if I am not the captive of your Pelian ship and I do not follow my masters, deceived," 8.417–18) evokes both the simile at Apollonius (4.35–40) that compares Medea to a captive slave-girl in her terror at leaving home and a possible alternative version of the myth in which she actually was abducted, evoked by Euripides' *Medea* (256).⁵¹ The lines in which Medea asks Jason at least to wait until he gets back to Greece to spurn her are even more loaded with dramatic irony:

miserere tamen promissaque serva
 usque ad Thessalicos saltem conubia portus
 inque tua me sperne domo. (V. Fl. 8.420–2)

But pity me and keep our promised marriage
at least as far as the Thessalian harbour
and scorn me in your own home.

This is not the right time for betrayal, she points out: here keeping faith with the character and keeping faith with the tradition are aligned. Medea also moves from accusations of cowardice to accusations of fictionality: is he imagining much huger forces than there are?

finge rates alias et adhuc maiora coire
agmina: nulla fides, nullis ego digna periclis?
non merui mortemque tuum comitumque tuorum? (V. Fl. 8.429–31)

Imagine other ships and bring together still greater
forces: is there no faith, am I worth no danger,
have I not deserved your death and those of your comrades?

Apollonius does make the size of the opposing force key in the Argonauts' decision to set her aside: ἐνθα κε λευγαλέη Μινύαι τότε δηιοτῆτι / παυρότεροι πλεόνεσσιν ὑπείκαθον ("then and there the outnumbered Minyans would have succumbed in a dreadful battle," 4.338–9), whereas Valerius' Argonauts do not actually mention it in their deliberations. It is hard to follow how Medea's argument works in this phrase: *nulla fides* seems to suggest that, even if the army were much bigger, she would easily be able to overcome it; is she worthy of the dangers as an enemy is worthy of a fighter? But the question of worth shades over into what she has done for them, and whether they should die for her, almost as if she is demanding them as a sacrifice. Valerius introduces the language of faith in an ambiguous context to remind the reader of Jason's oath and Medea's deception and the ultimate tragedy of faithlessness to come. At 8.437–8, Medea emphasizes the incredulity that Jason's mythical feats would deserve, if she had not been involved:

credidit ardentis quis te tunc iungere tauros
posse, quis ad saevi venturum templa draconis? (V. Fl. 8.437–8)

Who believed then that you could yoke the burning bulls, or could reach the precinct of the savage serpent?

Perhaps Valerius is again looking back to a version of the myth (still extant in Pindar) in which Medea is an onlooker rather than a participant, and Jason

was actually able to accomplish the feats on his own. But that version has not survived, Medea implies, because it is inherently implausible. Belief and doubt are at the centre of Valerius' relationship with previous versions of the myth, most importantly that of Apollonius. We are left in an ongoing position of doubt, when the text stops without any resolution.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the importance of ideas about *fides*, and the language of *fides*, as a way of defining poetic authority and reflecting on the poet's relationship to the tradition. Valerius frequently uses *fides* in a metapoetic sense to reflect on his own adaptation and manipulation of the Argonautic myth, and particularly his relationships with Virgil and Apollonius. This faith is often related to belief in the gods as the instigators and protectors of the narrative, and belief in mortal ability to understand and prove divine activity by reference to stories told about the landscape. For immortals in Valerius, the rhetoric of faith coincides with a sense of lack of control over events in the poem, while mortals, particularly Jason and Aeetes, but also Medea, use ideas of faith to manipulate their audience, in such a way as to bring out the unreliability of storytelling and of promises both human and divine.

What do these different aspects of literary and metaliterary play with ideas of faith, belief, and confidence tell us about the poetry of the Flavian period, or about the Flavian period more generally? Belatedness is a well-known theme in Flavian poetry, but, through the interplay of faith and fate, we can link belatedness to anxieties about power, authority, and deception. Valerius' choice of the Argonaut myth for his epic does not just emphasize exploration, glory, and new beginnings, it also brings out complexity, instability, and problems of faith and trust. A world between civil war and absolute power is one in which it is increasingly difficult to believe things, and to believe *in* things. Valerius is not unique in his engagement with the problematic aspects of *fides*, but he is remarkable in the intensity of this engagement, which is made even more telling by the state of the text at the end of the surviving poem. If the poem had ended with the moment of Absyrtus' death, it would have beautifully constructed Virgil as a Flavian poet before his time. As it is, the current ending leaves us embroiled in uncertainty, both fate and faith definitively compromised.

Faith, then, plays a key role in the Argonautic myth: faith and its lack are central to understanding Pelias, Jason, Medea, and Aeetes. *Fides* is also central to Valerius' positioning in the tradition: he moves between self-conscious innovation and faithlessness and a wider faithfulness to the fundamentals

of previous approaches, especially that of Apollonius. Moral, religious, literary, and metaliterary faith combine to make Valerius' *Argonautica* both the most faithful and least faithful of epics.

NOTES

Many thanks to Claire Stocks and Bridget England for organizing the conferences at which the two halves of this chapter were presented, to the audiences for comments, and to the volume editors for patience and constructive criticism. The text is taken from Liberman 1997–2002, except where noted, and all translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

- 1 See Richardson 1990: 122 on gods and narrator in Homeric epic. The bird's-eye view brings this out; see Lovatt 2013: 42. See also Bernstein 2014 on gods, fate, and political power in Valerius Flaccus.
- 2 On fate and narrative in the ancient and modern worlds, see Eidinow 2011: 72–5. On the gods and fate in Valerius, see Ferenczi 2014, who argues that two models of the relationship between Jupiter and fate are held in tension (Jupiter makes fate; fate exists independently). See also Zissos 2014.
- 3 See Zissos 2016a on negative allusion; on Alexandrian footnotes, see Ross 1975 78.
- 4 Keith (in this volume) shows that, in Statius, *fides* becomes more closely associated with women, but, in Valerius, both men and women, gods and goddesses explore tensions of trust.
- 5 Zissos 2008: 187, 261.
- 6 Zissos 2008: 175.
- 7 On prophetic doubling and intertextual irony, see Zissos 2004; see also Galli 2007: 152. The language of metaliterary *fides* operates in combination with other literary strategies to ironize Valerius' literary authority.
- 8 On prophecy and the *si non vana* motif, see O'Hara 1990: 55–6; more broadly in epic, see Lovatt 2013: 122–4.
- 9 E.g., Petr. 63.1.2, 65.1.2, 79.10.4; Sen. *Con.* 7.5.1, 7.6.9; Quint. *Decl.* 3.3.9, 4.2.6, 9.10.1; Apul. *Apol.* 43.13. A telling example is Virg. *A.* 3.433–4 in the speech of Helenus to Aeneas, foretelling the future, where it is used to underline the importance of sacrificing to Juno and to claim extra credibility for his prophecy: *si qua est Heleno prudentia vati, / si qua fides, animum si veris implet Apollo* ("if there is any prudence in Helenus the prophet, if there is any faith, if Apollo fills the soul with true things"). If the implication of his prophecy is that sacrificing to Juno will avert her displeasure, this will certainly not be true for a very long time (at the end of the Punic wars). But Virgil does not seem to use the phrase with such heavy irony as Valerius.

- 10 The links between *fama* as rumour and *fama* as epic fame and tradition bring out the complexity of the attitudes to truth and epic in Virgil and beyond; see Hardie 2012.
- 11 Elsewhere, Virgil plays with the metapoetic sense of *fides*, in combination with *fama*: at A. 9.79 in the invocation to the Muses before the transformation of Aeneas' ships into nymphs the poet says *dicite: prisca fides facto, sed fama perennis* ("Tell: there is old faith in the deed, but a long-lasting story"). Hardie 1994: 89 finds the combination of antiquity, reliability, and tradition paradoxical: "Time may obliterate a tradition, but antiquity is normally a guarantee of the reliability of a surviving tradition, rather than the reverse."
- 12 On Augustan poetry and the cry of *perfidie*, see Stocks (in this volume), who argues that the broken bonds of trust between lovers and family members evoke a fear of civil war that is intensified in the increasingly public use of *perfidie* in Flavian poetry.
- 13 The tradition of Aeneas as untrustworthy is old. Scafoglio 2013 points out the existence of a story in the Greek historians that Aeneas betrayed Troy in return for safe passage out (D. H. *Ant. Rom.* 1.48.3 attributes it to Menecrates of Xanthus from the fourth century BC).
- 14 Variations on *fides* are used eighttimes in *Heroides* 7 to bring out Aeneas' lack of faith. On Ovid's mobilization of Aeneas' lack of faith, see Casali 2006.
- 15 Ginsberg (in this volume) shows how elegiac stereotypes of faithfulness and faithlessness are used to reflect on historical women in the *Octavia*.
- 16 Lucan uses the phrase once at 10.219, in the speech of Acoreus about the Nile; cf. Manolaraki 2013: 83–6; Statius uses it at *Theb.* 11.215 in the speech of Tisiphone to Jupiter; and Silius uses it once at 14.351. Valerius uses it three times at 1.383, 2.167, and 5.75. *Si qua fides* is more Virgilian: A. 2.142, 3.433–4, 6.459, 10.792, and 11.502 (substituting *fiducia* for *fides*).
- 17 See Liberman 1997–2002; Wijsman 1996: 52.
- 18 On Valerius' self-conscious engagement with Apollonian aetiology, see Krasne 2014.
- 19 Jason compares himself to Bacchus and Perseus at V. Fl. 5.497, implying that he could have mustered a bigger expedition than them.
- 20 The two stories are linked in Catullus 64, which begins with the Argonauts but focuses on Ariadne; Ariadne is already a key exemplar for Medea in Apollonius, for instance at 4.428–34, where the cloak, which Hypsipyle gave to Jason before he abandoned her, and on which Dionysus first slept with Ariadne, is used to deceive Absyrtus. On Catullus 64 and Apollonius, see Clare 1997.
- 21 See Augoustakis in this volume on *fides* in Statius' Lemnian narrative.
- 22 Buckley 2013a: 87.
- 23 Liberman 1997–2002: 62 follows Parrhasius' emendation of *iaceat* here: but "silence" seems to me to bring out more clearly the idea of the thunderbolts as constructions of interpreted sound.

- 24 For Hypsipyle as unreliable narrator, especially in Statius, see Casali 2003 and Gibson 2004.
- 25 Valerius' Hypsipyle is often felt to be a more straightforward narrator and reliable character than that of Statius, but this use of *fides* puts pressure on the narrator's commendation of her at 2.242–6. Her achievement at that point is also underwritten by an appeal to a religious figure (she dresses her father as Bacchus). Thanks to Emma Buckley for this point.
- 26 The reaction of the Argonauts to the loss of Hercules plays further with the tendentious tradition of his inclusion: at V. Fl. 3.598–600 they have faith in themselves (*at sociis immota fides*, "but faith for the allies is unmoved," 3.598), despite hanging on the name of Hercules, but the narrator later marks their confidence as empty talk (*vana lingua*, 3.632).
- 27 See Feeney 1991: 160–2, Zissos 2008: 145 on Juno's Virgilian heritage.
- 28 See Zissos 2008: 140–1. Heracles' participation is already mentioned in Hesiod (fr. 263 M-W), but Herodorus explicitly excludes him (*FGrHist* 31 F41); in some versions, including that of Dionysius Scytobrachion, he reaches Colchis.
- 29 In Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F111) and Herodotus (7.193), Heracles is abandoned at Thessaly when the *Argo* complains about his weight; see also Feeney 1987.
- 30 See Heerink and Manuwald 2014 *passim* for the importance of Hercules in Valerius.
- 31 On this passage, see Zissos 2006.
- 32 Bernstein 2014 points out the way Valerius has added or strengthened a layer of fraternal conflict in the Argonaut story.
- 33 O'Hara 1990. See also Ferenczi 2014: 147 on Jason's ignorance and the epistemology of the Flavian *Argonautica*. Jason's problematic use of the language of belief is seen at 3.82, where he exhorts his men to fight as if they believed they were fighting Colchians. But they are actually fighting their hosts, the Doliones, whom they have just left.
- 34 The wording evokes Helenus in Virgil's *Aeneid*, a key model for Phineus; see above note 9. Murgatroyd 2009 flatly denies that this clause could do anything other than "express confidence rather than lack of faith" (262), but Phineus for one has good reason to doubt divine benevolence.
- 35 On Epicurean tendencies in epic, see Dyson 1997, Kronenberg 2005, Leigh 2006, and Earnshaw 2013; on challenges to the divine, see Chaudhuri 2014.
- 36 For Phineus as a narrator, see Hunter 1993: 91; Clare 2002: 74; and Lovatt 2013: 140. Murgatroyd 2009: 264 presents Valerius' Phineus as "more economical and focused," by dropping the geographical detail and focusing on "emotional impact."
- 37 Liberman 1997–2002 reads *saevaeque* but translates "comme moi, avez triomphé de ce peuple cruel," with no comment in the apparatus, but Ehlers reads *saeva*, so this is probably an error in Liberman's text.

- 38 In the same way, the south winds offer the Argonauts *certa fides* ("certain faith") in going on without Hercules at 3.598–600, but they will of course need him for many things other than rowing.
- 39 Equivalence between helmsman and prophet can be seen by the analogous replacement of Amphiaraus by Thiodamas in *Thebaid* 10. At *Theb.* 10.202, the phrase *certa fides* also appears in Thiodamas' dream of Amphiaraus, which causes his massacre of the Thebans, inspired by fate and *fortuna* with Juno's help. The massacre is presented as hugely destructive and morally problematic, and, further, it does not result in a positive outcome to the war. On the powerful gaze of the navigator, see Lovatt 2013: 140–1.
- 40 For a full treatment of substitution as a key epic trope, see Frisby 2013. See also Hardie 1993: 19–56.
- 41 On Valerius' Apollonian tendencies, see Venini 1971; for Valerius as *doctus poeta*, see Stover 2010.
- 42 On Medea and genre, see Stover 2003 and 2011.
- 43 On the importance of the relationship between Medea and Aeetes, see Zissos 2012.
- 44 Zissos 2012: 113.
- 45 If there is a positive Colchian narrative arc functioning above and beyond the poem (whether the complete poem, or what we have now), as with Jupiter's mention of the Epigonoι in the *Thebaid* (*veniet suspectior aetas / ultoresque alii*, *Theb.* 7.220–1), it offers cold comfort.
- 46 Bernstein 2014: 166 shows that Valerius' choice of myth is inevitably political: "The *Argonautica* presents a world in which domination by hostile gods and tyrants has made it all but impossible for less powerful figures to practise the ordinary virtues of honesty and reciprocity."
- 47 Keith (in this volume) points out that the phrase *fidissima custos* is used in Statius' *Theb.* 1.530 of Acaste, the nurse and chaperone of Argia and Deipyle. If this is a reference to Valerius' dragon, it could be a heavily ironic choice of words on Statius' part.
- 48 At 4.421, Apollonius calls the joint plan of Jason and Medea to lure Absyrtus to them a great trick (μέγαν δόλον). At 4.435–41, Apollonius continually emphasizes the connection between Medea's deceptions and her magic or charm.
- 49 Tib. 1.6.57, 1.6.73; Hor. *Carm.* 1.18.11, 1.23.9, 4.9.30, 4.12.22; Ov. *Am.* 1.8.28; *Ep.* 10.67, 12.195; *Rem.* 495. See Lazzarini 2012: 115 on the elegiac tone of this speech.
- 50 Medea also develops within the poem, repeating actions that occurred only once in previous versions: for instance she leaves her bedroom at 5.329 to cleanse herself of her dream; at 6.477–94, Juno leads her out of her bedroom again; at 7.4–5, she hesitates as she goes back into her bedroom; at 7.22, the shining

limen symbolizes the arrival of dawn; after Jason accuses Aeetes of lacking faith (7.100), the hall itself is called *infida aula* (102), and Medea's desire to follow Jason is encapsulated by her gaze at the *fores* (106). She prays to move the doorposts forward (109) instead of going beyond the *limina* herself (110). The crucial moment of decision at 7.300–8 comes as Venus makes her leave her bedroom, and she is compared to Pentheus made to dress up by Bacchus. At 323–30, she goes back to her *thalamus* to prepare the drugs, and the doors fly open at 328. Repetition increases the intensity of the psychological anguish, while multiplying the intertextual resonances.

- 51 See Hulse 2015, who also sees the simile as a reference to *servitium amoris*. Hunter 2015: 89–90 emphasizes the dissonance of this simile and how it foreshadows Medea's marginalization in Greece.

Women's *Fides* in Statius' *Thebaid*

ALISON KEITH

In an important discussion of *fides* in Silius' *Punica*, Arthur Pomeroy remarks that, "if *pietas* is the generic term to indicate relationships within a *domus*, which takes its shades of meaning according to which member of the family is required to show social solidarity and how, *fides* is the tie which binds those who have a reciprocal relationship with one another outside familial contexts."¹ His astute pairing of *fides* with *pietas* resonates against Silius' coupling of the two Roman virtues at *Punica* 13.749, where the ghost of Hannibal's father, Hamilcar, praises his son for adhering to a youthful vow to devastate Italy with war and avenge the Carthaginian losses of the First Punic War:²

... quod si Laurentia vastat
nunc igni regna et Phrygias res vertere temptat,
o pietas, o sancta fides, o vera propago!
atque utinam amissum reparet decus! ... (Sil. 13.747–50)

But if [my son] is now laying waste the Laurentine realm with fire and trying to overturn Phrygian affairs – o Duty, o sacred Good Faith, o my true offspring! And would that he might repair our lost glory!

Hamilcar frames his son's exemplary loyalty to Carthage (o *sancta fides*, 13.479) between two different formulae celebrating Hannibal's familial piety in the same line (o *pietas* ... o *uera propago*! 13.879) in a brilliant rhetorical *tricolon crescens* whose epigrammatic wit and brevity underline, from the Roman perspective focalized through his interlocutor Scipio, his son's Punic (im)morality.³

Statius also couples the pair of exemplary Roman virtues, late in the *Thebaid*, in Tisiphone's request of her sister Megaera to help her bring Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polynices to their final, fratricidal combat on the field of battle:⁴

tu, cui totus adhuc furor exultantque recentes
Cocyti de fonte comae da iungere vires.
non solitas acies nec Martia bella paramus,
sed fratrum (licet alma Fides Pietasque repugnant
vincentur), fratrum stringendi comminus enses.
grande opus! ipsae odiis, ipsae discordibus armis
aptemur ... (Stat. *Theb.* 11.95–101)

You, who still have all your rage and whose hair freshly exults in Cocytus' spring, join forces with me. We prepare no standard battle-lines nor martial battles, but brothers' – though kindly Good Faith and Duty oppose it, they will be bested – yes, brothers' swords must engage hand-to-hand. It's a huge task! We ourselves, let us be kitted out with hatred and discordant arms ...

Tisiphone implicitly appeals to both virtues to secure her sister's aid, even though the Furies represent the very antithesis of these Roman virtues, and Tisiphone herself dismisses them from the criminal battlefield before Thebes.⁵ Indeed, already nine books before Tisiphone here denies *fides* and *pietas* any role in the brothers' fate, Tydeus (acting as Polynices' emissary to Eteocles) had observed the lack of both virtues in the Theban brothers' relations, or at least in Eteocles' conduct toward his brother (2.462): *haec pietas, haec magna fides!* ("Is this your duty, this your great trustworthiness!")⁶ Jupiter, by contrast, invokes both virtues when he explains to Bacchus the powers that demand Thebes' punishment (7.216–18): *rogat hoc tellusque polusque / et pietas et laesa fides natura et ipsi / Eumenidum mores*⁷ ("Earth and Heaven demand this, dutiful devotion and good faith, nature and the very laws of the Furies"). But all three passages also undermine, to some extent, the neat dichotomy Pomeroy articulates between public *fides* and private *pietas* in the *Thebaid*. For the brothers' dispute (*fraternas acies*, 1.1) has not only ruptured the familial bonds of filial and fraternal *pietas* but has exploded the political landscape of Greece to redraw the shifting political alliances of myth, by motivating an Argive attack on Thebes (led by the Argive king Adrastus) that is also a Theban-Argive alliance (between Adrastus and his Theban son-in-law Polynices).

Of course, these are only some of the many ironies Statius exploits throughout his Theban epic, but their conjunction in the figures of the abstract Roman virtues of *fides* and *pietas* may be felt to offer especially

urgent commentary on the renewal of Roman imperial politics and society in the aftermath of the civil wars of AD 68–9 and the installation of a new imperial dynasty on the Palatine.⁸ Certainly Vespasian pointedly included *Fides Publica* among the public virtues celebrated on his coinage from AD 71 on, and a series of virtues, again including *Fides Publica*, was issued on the coinage commemorating his consecration after death.⁹ While Titus dropped *Fides Publica* from his coin issues of imperial and public virtues, Domitian returned it to the coinage in AD 85, along with the tangible resources that underwrote public confidence and trust in (and therefore loyalty to) his rule – viz., *Annona* (the grain supply), *Moneta* (the imperial mint), and *Victoria Germanica*.¹⁰

This study takes up some of the historical ironies and literary ambiguities that Statius exploits in his representation of *fides* in the *Thebaid*, but turns away from the public face of Roman *fides* (i.e., imperial *Fides Publica*) to explore its domestic and gendered resonances, with particular attention to the way that female characters demonstrate (or fail to demonstrate) not only *pietas* but also *fides* in the Theban episodes of the epic.¹¹ Gérard Freyburger has amply documented the significance of *fides* in the republican era, even in the private spheres of marriage, friendship, and hospitality,¹² and we shall see that in domestic slavery too it had an important role to play.¹³ It should therefore occasion no surprise that we find significant continuity in Statius' imperial Latin epic representation of *fides* with republican and Augustan moral codes and social conventions. But there is also significantly more evidence in the *Thebaid* for women's demonstration of the virtue (or its lack) than we can see in the republican period, and this may imply a corresponding increase in the virtue's importance and value in the domestic sphere in imperial Roman society as well. My chapter thus aims to contribute to our understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of domestic *fides* in Flavian Rome by interrogating Statius' literary representation of the virtue in his *Thebaid*.¹⁴

The earliest appearance in the *Thebaid* of *fides* in a woman illustrates the difficulty of dismissing a domestic context for the virtue, inasmuch as it is the foremost characteristic of Acaste, the nurse of Adrastus' daughters Argia and Deipyle:¹⁵ ... *tunc rex longaevus Acasten / (natarum haec altrix eadem et fidissima custos / lecta sacrum iustae Veneri occultare pudorem) / imperat acciri tacitaque innummurat aure* ("Then the aged king bids there be summoned Acaste (his daughters' nurse and most loyal guardian, chosen to conceal their chastity consecrated to lawful wedlock) and he murmurs in her silent ear," 1.529–32). Acaste's trustworthiness is vital for Adrastus' preservation of his daughters' modesty: there is a suggestive play of public and private here, as Acaste's loyalty behind the scenes within the household ensures public confidence in the chastity of Adrastus' daughters, itself

a valuable commodity in the ancient marriage mart. Indeed, it is tempting to align Acaste's implied *fides* here with that which falls under Freyburger's category of marriage,¹⁶ since her domestic service safeguards the Argive king's marital resources (in the form of his chaste daughters). But there is no public context for Acaste's own trustworthiness; the household in which she is a slave circumscribes her actions, and there is no category in Freyburger's semantic and religious study of the virtue that corresponds to domestic slavery.¹⁷ Roman problematization of servile loyalty comes into view in the Latin textual record after his period of focus (from the republic to the Augustan principate), in Valerius Maximus' *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, where the Tiberian author preserves a number of anecdotes about slaves loyal to their masters from the late republic but with a special concentration on the triumviral proscriptions, in the context of renewed civil war at Rome (Val. Max. 6.8). What is apparently taken for granted in republican texts thus emerges as a keen social problematic in the early imperial period, although only in connection with male slaves (and male masters) in Valerius Maximus' compendium. In Statius' Acaste, however, we can document the extension of the problematic of servile *fides* to the domestic, female sphere.

The most frequent semantic field to which Statius assigns *fides* in the *Thebaid* is that in relation to the trustworthiness or reliability of stories (a divagation along metapoetic lines would be compelling here),¹⁸ prophecies, oracles, and portents, and there is a significant point of contact in the content of the first oracle in the epic, whose *fides* is explicitly interrogated, with the representation of Acaste as a trustworthy safeguard of Adrastus' daughters' modesty. For *fides* first appears in conjunction with the report of Apollo's oracle concerning the appearance of the husbands of Adrastus' daughters as a boar and a lion.¹⁹

hic sexus melioris inops sed prole virebat
 feminea, gemino natarum pignore fultus.
 cui Phoebus generos (monstrum exitiabile dictum!
mox adapertha fides) fato ducente canebat
 saetigerumque suem et fulvum adventare leonem. (Stat. *Theb.* 1.393–7)

The Argive king lacked children of the better sex but flourished with female offspring, supported by a twin pledge of daughters. Apollo prophesied to him that under the guidance of destiny his sons-in-law would arrive (terrible prodigy to report! but its trustworthiness was soon proven) as a bristling boar and tawny lion.

The thematic interaction between *pignore* and *fides* is merely implicit here, and is perhaps worth drawing attention to only because of its amplification in the next book, where Statius explicitly refers to the fertile confidence in

grandchildren embodied in Adrastus' daughters, again in the context of Apollo's oracular interest in the Argive king's sons-in-law. The morning after the Argive storm prompts the arrival of Tydeus (the boar) and Polynices (the lion) at Adrastus' palace, the Argive king meets his prospective sons-in-law to confirm the reliability of both Apollo's oracle and his daughters' chastity:

egregii iuvenum, quos non sine numine regnis
 invexit nox atra meis, quibus ipse per imbres
 fulminibus mixtos intempestumque Tonantem
 has meus usque domos vestigia fecit Apollo,
 non equidem obscurum vobis plebique Pelasgae
 esse rear, quantis conubia nostra procorum
 turba petant studiis; geminae mihi namque, nepotum
laeta fides, aequo pubescent sidere natae.

(Stat. *Theb.* 2.152–9)

Outstanding among youths, whom a black night brought to my kingdom, not without divinity, for whom my Apollo guided your tracks through thundershowers and the Thunderer's unseasonable sky all the way to my house, I should not indeed think it unclear to you and the Pelasgian people with what great zeal a crowd of suitors seeks marriage with my house; for I have two daughters, fertile confidence of grandsons, of equal age reaching maturity.

Apollo's trustworthy oracle about the bridegrooms of Adrastus' daughters seems to colour the Argive king's characterization here of his daughters' chaste fertility, which reliably promises grandsons to him and sons to their husbands.²⁰

Statius keeps the focus on domestic *fides* early in the second book of the epic, in his alignment of Polynices' "faithful wife," Argia (*fida coniunx*, 2.332), with the "faithful heart" of his friend and brother-in-law, Tydeus (*pectore fido*, 2.364) – both implicitly contrasted with his faithless brother Eteocles. Argia is the first to demonstrate her *fides* (of the type that Valerius Maximus calls "wifely fidelity," *uxoriam fidem*, 6.7.1),²¹ in a speech that implies an etymological link between *fides* and the marriage contract, *foedus*:²²

non alias tacita iuvenis Teumesius iras
 mente acuit. sed fida vias arcanaque coniunx
 senserat; utque toris primo complexa iacebat
 aurorae pallore virum, "quos, callide, motus
 quamue fugam moliris?" ait "nil transit amantes.
 sentio, pervigiles acuunt suspiria questus,
 numquam in pace sopor. quotiens haec ora natare

fletibus et magnas latrantia pectora curas
 admota deprendo manu! nil foedere rupto
 conubiisue super moveor viduaque iuventa,
 etsi crudus amor necdum post flammea toti
 intepuere tori: tua me, properabo fateri,
 angit, amate, salus ..."

(Stat. *Theb.* 2.331–43)

Not otherwise does the Teumesian youth silently sharpen his anger. But his loyal wife had perceived his paths and secrets; and when she lay embracing him in bed in the first faint light of dawn, she said, "What movements or what flight are you planning? Nothing escapes lovers. I can tell that wakeful complaints sharpen your sighs, you never sleep in peace. How often, by moving my hand, do I catch your face swimming with tears, and your breast loudly heaving with great cares. I am not moved by the ruptured contract or marriage, or even by my widowed youth, even if our love is still fresh and the passion of the wedding couch has not yet cooled after the bridal: your safety worries me, I hasten to confess, beloved."

Argia's speech well illustrates her exemplary wifely fidelity, as she puts Polynices' personal safety (*salus*, 343) before her marriage (339–40), the terrible prospect of youthful widowhood (*viduaque iuventa*, 340), and even their sexual passion (341–2). Statius draws from the lexicon of erotic elegy throughout the passage: the terms *callide* (334), *amantes* (335), *suspiria* (336), *questus* (336), *fletibus* (338), *curas* (338), *amor* (341), and *amate* (343) are all at home in the elegiac poetry of the Augustan period.²³ Although there is a hint of elegiac jealousy in Argia's concluding words (*quo tendis iter? ni conscius ardor / ducit et ad Thebas melior socer*, "Where does your journey take you? Unless a secret passion, and a better father-in-law, lead you to Thebes," 2.351–2), her deployment of the erotic vocabulary of Latin elegy ironically emphasizes not just her physical fidelity but also her mental good faith.²⁴ Statius thereby characterizes Argia as an exponent of the highest kind of spousal loyalty.²⁵

Argia's exemplary wifely fidelity finds historical complements in Valerius Maximus' record "of the fidelity of wives towards their husbands" (*de fide uxorum erga viros*, Val. Max. 6.7). His short chapter contains only three examples of uxorial loyalty, but at least two of them offer remarkably good comparanda for Argia's commitment to Polynices in the *Thebaid*. Valerius reports in one of his examples that a woman named Turia saved her husband from death during the triumviral proscriptions, by hiding him in the ceiling of their bedroom:

Q. Lucretium, proscriptum a triumviris, uxor Turia inter cameram et tectum cubicula abditum una conscia ancillula ab imminente exitio non sine magno periculo suo

tutum praestitit, singularique fide id egit ut cum ceteri proscripti in alienis et hostilibus regionibus per summos corporis et animi cruciatus vix evaderent, ille in cubiculo et in coniugis sinu salutem retineret. (Val. Max. 6.7.2)

Proscribed by the Triumvirs, Q. Lucretius was hidden by his wife Turia between the ceiling and the roof of their bedroom. So with one slave girl for accomplice she kept him safe from imminent death not without great risk to herself. When others of the proscribed barely escaped in alien and hostile regions at the price of cruel tortures of body and mind, he, thanks to her extraordinary fidelity, kept his life in his bedroom and the bosom of his spouse. (trans. Shackleton Bailey)

Turia's "singular loyalty" was to assure her husband's personal safety (*salutem*), just as Argia is exercised by the impossibility of assuring her husband Polynices' *salus* (343) if he should go to Thebes to claim his year on the throne. Moreover, another of Valerius' examples of wifely loyalty will serve as a model for Argia, later in the epic, when she alone of the Argive women goes to Thebes, accompanied by a single slave, in order to give her dead husband due burial. But that is to anticipate my argument. Here, it is sufficient to note merely some humour in the final lines that Statius gives Argia, when she wonders if Polynices' interest is less in Thebes than in another woman. Certainly, Polynices laughs off her suggestion:

... hic breve tandem
risit Echionius iuvenis tenerumque dolorem
coniugis amplexu solatus et oscula maestis
tempestiva genis posuit lacrimasque repressit. (Stat. *Theb.* 2.352–5)

At this Echion's youthful descendant finally laughed briefly, and consoled his wife's tender grief with an embrace; he set timely kisses on her sad cheeks, and checked her tears.

The amatory vocabulary that characterizes his actions here responds to that in Argia's speech and confirms Statius' portrayal of the pair as newlyweds still in the first flush of erotic passion. It also works, moreover, to confirm her sexual fidelity to her husband, the primary (perhaps original) sense of the term when used of women.²⁶

After a brief speech in which he articulates the hope that she will be queen of both Thebes and Argos (2.356–62), Polynices leaves her bridal bower to seek his loyal comrade, Tydeus: *sic ait, et caro raptim se limine profert. / Tydea iam socium coeptis, iam pectore fido ...* ("So saying, he swiftly left their dear chamber, [seeking] Tydeus, now the ally of his undertakings, now

of faithful breast," 2.363–4). Statius links the loyalty of Argia and Tydeus in these back-to-back scenes, in order to contrast Polynices' loyal wife and faithful friend all the more starkly with his brother Eteocles, whose "good faith" Tydeus (Polynices' substitute brother) volunteers to put to the test at Thebes in the embassy that constitutes the book's central episode:

fit mora consilio, cum multa moventibus una
iam potior cunctis sedit sententia, fratris
pertemptare fidem tutosque in regna precando
explorare aditus. audax ea munera Tydeus
sponte subit; nec non et te, fortissimo gentis
Aetolum, multum lacrimis conata morari
Deipyle, sed iussa patris tutique regressus
legato iustaeque preces vicere sororis. (Stat. *Theb.* 2.367–74)

There is a delay for planning, when, as they suggest many ideas, one proposal finds preference with all, that he test his brother's trustworthiness and seek by humble plea a safe approach to the realm. Bold Tydeus undertakes the task of his own accord. Likewise you too, bravest of the Aetolians' race, Deipyle tried often to delay by her tears, but her father's commands, the safe return owed an ambassador, and the righteous pleas of her sister overcame them.

Statius forbears to include another extended scene of wifely loyalty so soon after that between Argia and Polynices, and the only person whose *fides* is scrutinized here is Eteocles (369).²⁷ But it is surely implied that Deipyle rehearses with Tydeus the same arguments, with the same motivation, as Argia had deployed with Polynices – and with the same ultimate lack of success, despite the same exemplary *uxoria fides*.

Throughout the *Thebaid*, virtuous and loyal wives and mothers individually demand a range of actions from fathers, husbands, and sons, with the ironic result that the two brothers are brought to fratricidal combat on the battlefield before Thebes in Book 11. In Book 3, for example, Venus, whose reckless impersonation of a Fury on Lemnos will rupture the bonds of *pietas* and *fides* in a deadly "battle of the sexes" in *Thebaid* 5,²⁸ acts out of exemplary familial loyalty when she stops Mars (who is en route to implement Jupiter's war plans) and pleads for the safety of their shared progeny (3.263–91). The war god immediately recognizes her concern for their line and reassures her that he has forgotten neither the marriage of their daughter Harmonia to Cadmus, nor his paramour's loyalty to her line: *nec mihi Sidonii genialia foedera Cadmi / nec tua cara fides (ne falsa incessere gaude!) / exciderunt* ("Neither the happy marriage of Tyrean Cadmus nor your dear loyalty have I forgotten – do not glory in false accusations!" 3.300–2). It is

highly entertaining to see Mars characterize Venus as an exemplary wife and mother, when she is not only his illicit paramour but also the adulterous mother of his illegitimate child.²⁹ But his words also seem to resonate both positively, in the context of the moral climate of Flavian Rome and the renewed promotion of Augustan sexual values under Domitian,³⁰ and negatively, in that of the deformative pressure Statius (following Lucan) brings to bear on all the virtues in his fratricidal civil war epic.

As so often in epic, however, what is comic on the divine plane is tragic on the mortal level. At the end of Book 3, loyal Argia entreats her father to support Polynices' war of vengeance by appeals to her father's friendship with the exile and her marriage to, and son by, him. Seeking her father out at the dead of night, she carries with her the infant Thessander:³¹

at gemitus Argia uiri non amplius aequo
corde ferens sociumque animo miserata dolorem,
sicut erat, laceris pridem turpata capillis,
et fletu signata genas, ad celsa verendi
ibat tecta patris parvumque sub ubere caro
Thessandrum portabat auo iam nocte suprema ... (Stat. *Theb.* 3.678–83)

But Argia could not bear further with equanimity her husband's groans but pitied his shared grief and, just as she was, defiling her figure by pulling her hair and marking her cheeks with tears, she went to the lofty halls of her revered father and carried little Thessander beneath her breast to his loving grandfather, already at the dead of night ...

Like a practised orator, she grounds her appeal for her father's aid on his good faith, drawing his attention to his past evidence of *fides*:

... tu solus opem, tu summa medendi
iura tenes; da bella, pater, generique iacentis
aspice res humiles, atque hanc, pater, aspice prolem
exulis; huic olim generis pudor. o ubi prima
hospitia et iunctae testato numine dextrae?
hic certe est quem dabant, quem dixit Apollo;
non egomet tacitos Veneris furata calores
culpatamue face: tua iussa verenda tuosque
dilexi monitus. (Stat. *Theb.* 3.696–703)

You alone hold aid, you alone hold the highest rights of healing. Grant war, father; look at the humble estate of your prostrate son-in-law, and look, father, at this child, the exile's offspring. One day he will feel the shame of his lineage. Oh, where are

the first bond of friendship and the right hands you joined under divine witness?

He is certainly the man whom fate granted, whom Apollo predicted; I have not been maddened by a secret ardour or guilty passion: your revered commands and your warnings I have cherished.

Argia centres her plea on her father's welcome of the exile and their ensuing friendship (698–9), perhaps more accurately characterized as an alliance both personal and political, reinforced by her marriage and the birth of her son. Freyburger analyses the confirmation of *fides* by the visible handclasp, *dextrarum iunctio*, in several contexts, including the military context of *receptio in fidem*; the institutions of *clientela* and manumission; the claims of friendship and hospitality; and the marriage rite.³² Almost all of these contexts are relevant to the relationship between Polynices and Adrastus, and Argia here seems to try to invoke the full panoply. Especially striking, moreover, is her reference to Apollo's oracular good faith in the prediction enabling Adrastus' recognition of Polynices and Tydeus as his fated sons-in-law. For Argia grounds her plea to her father in her exemplary chastity, by which she also demonstrates her model spousal loyalty (3.704–5): *nescis, pater optime, nescis / quantus amor castae misero nupsisse marito* ("you do not know, best of fathers, you do not know how much love a chaste wife has when wed to an unhappy husband"). It is thus a further irony that Argia's exemplary uxorial fidelity should play a part in bringing the two brothers to the epic's fratricidal climax.³³

Nor is it only faithful Argive wives who send their husbands to war against Thebes. Eriphyle is a *malum exemplum* of uxorial disloyalty and impiety, and is introduced as such when she sees the necklace of Harmonia, worn by Argia at the double wedding of Adrastus' daughters:³⁴

viderat hoc coniunx perituri vatis, et aras
ante omnes epulasque trucem secreta coquebat
invidiam, saevis detur si quando potiri
cultibus, heu nihil auguriis adiuta propinquis.
quos optat gemitus, quantas cupit impia clades!
digna quidem: sed quid miseri decepta mariti
arma, quid insontes nati meruere furores?

(Stat. *Theb.* 2.299–305)

The wife of the doomed seer had seen this necklace, and before all the altars and feasts she secretly nurtured violent envy, if only it might once be granted to her to possess the terrible ornament – she was helped not at all, alas, by omens near at hand. What groans the impious woman desires, what great disaster! She is worthy of it indeed: but what have her unhappy husband's arms or the innocent frenzy of her son deserved?

Eriphyle's wifely impiety leads, apparently inexorably, to spousal treachery:³⁵

iamque et fatidici mens expugnata fatiscit
auguris; ille quidem casus et dira videbat
signa, sed ipsa manu cunctanti iniecerat arma
Atropos obrueratque deum, nec coniugis absunt
insidiae, vetitoque domus iam fulgurat auro.
hoc aurum vati fata exitiale monebant
Argolico; scit et ipsa (nefas!), sed perfida coniunx
dona viro mutare velit, spoliisque potentis
imminet Argiae raptoque excellere cultu.

(Stat. *Theb.* 4.187–95)

And now the prophetic seer's mind weakens under siege; indeed, he saw the outcome and dread portents, but Atropos herself had cast arms into his delaying hand and over-whelmed his god. Nor was the treachery of his wife absent, and already his house gleams with the forbidden gold. Destiny warned this gold was deadly for the Argive seer; even his wife herself knows (wickedness!), but the faithless wife wished to exchange her husband's life for the gift, and inclines to obtain Argia's spoils and outdo her in stolen finery.

Eriphyle plots her crime out of a typically feminine love of finery: no doubt we can trace her lust for the trinket back to Amata's necklace (*A.* 7. 349–65; cf. 7.345), and Camilla's lust for Chloereus' war-gear (*A.* 11.768–82). Statius does not hesitate to define her actions as criminal (*nefas*, 4.193; cf. 7.787–8, *nefandae coniugis*),³⁶ and again there is a Virgilian model, in Cleopatra's infamous generalship at Actium (*nefas*, *A.* 8.688). But it is notable that Eriphyle's treachery is perfectly matched in this context by Argia's loyalty. Together, faithful wife and faithless wife conspire to send their husbands into fratricidal war at Thebes.

We shall return to Argia at the conclusion of this chapter, but before we reach her exemplary loyalty in Book 12, it will be worthwhile to consider the trustworthiness of the brothers' other female family members, especially that of their sisters and mother. For another of Polynices' motivations is the imagined loyalty of his sisters, a vision that competes with Argia's evident exemplarity of uxorial fidelity as he marches off to Thebes:³⁷

iam regnum matrisque sinus fidisque sorores
spe votisque tenet, tamen et de turre suprema
attonitum totoque extantem corpore longe
respicit Argian; haec mentem oculosque reducit
coniugis et dulces avertit pectore Thebas.

(Stat. *Theb.* 4.88–92)

Already he holds the kingdom in his hopes and prayers, along with his mother's embrace, and his loyal sisters; nevertheless, he also looks back from afar at Argia, standing out, distraught, with her whole body on the topmost tower; she recalls her husband's thoughts and eyes, and turns sweet Thebes from his heart.

The potentially incestuous juxtaposition of the exile's "loyal sisters" with his mother's breast (*matrisque sinus*, 4.88) invites further caution in assessing *fides* as invariably a virtue in this epic, as, indeed, Statius underlines in the implicit contrast between Argive exogamy (in the person of Argia) and Theban endogamy (in the persons of Polynices' mother and sisters).³⁸ Later in the poem, moreover, Statius confirms the sisters' loyalty to their exiled brother with a simile that likewise calls into question the value of familial good faith, as Antigone and Ismene review their family's unhappy history and speculate fruitlessly about the outcome of the war.³⁹

nutat utroque timor, quemnam hoc certamine victum
quem vicisse velint: tacite praeponderat exul.
sic Pandioniae repetunt ubi fida volucres
hospitia atque larem bruma pulsante relictum
stantque super nidos veterisque exordia fati
adnarrant tectis: it truncum ac flebile murmur;
verba putant, voxque illa tamen non dissona verbis. (Stat. *Theb.* 8.614–20)

Fear nods both ways. Whom should they wish defeated in this contest, whom to have the victory? Silently the exile tips the scale. As when Pandion's birds seek again their trusted welcome and the home abandoned when frost struck, and they stand over their nest and rehearse the ancient tale of their woe to the house: their broken and lamenting murmur goes forth, they think it words, and yet that sound is not unlike words.

The sisters' unexpressed sympathy for Polynices carries its own incestuous charge, and our unease only deepens when the poet compares them to Pandion's daughters, Procne and Philomela, for we recall that the transformation of that pair of sisters into birds was the result of their murder and dismemberment of Procne's son Itys, a story famously related by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (6.424–76). In the light of the (literary) history of the Pandionids, it seems difficult not to read *fida hospitia* here as profoundly ironic: even if the welcome is that of the birds' familiar nest, Ovid's account of Tereus' brutal welcome of his sister-in-law to his kingdom and the sisters' vengeful preparation of his cannibalistic feast resonates powerfully in the background.⁴⁰

The loyalty of the brothers' mother and sisters is profoundly compromised by those brothers' competing claims to their father(-brother)'s throne, as Statius makes clear before the climactic combat in Book 11, when both Jocasta and Antigone appeal to the brothers' *fides* to stop the fight. For what can *fides* mean in this context? Jocasta herself emphasizes the impiety of their proposed combat as she attempts to restrain Eteocles:⁴¹

me miseram! vinces? prius haec tamen arma necesse est

experiare domi: stabo ipso in limine portae

auspicium infelix scelerumque inmanis imago.

haec tibi canities, haec sunt calcanda, nefande,

ubera, perque uterum sonipes hic matris agendus.

parce: quid oppositam capulo parmaque repellis?

non ego te contra Stygiis feralia sanxi

vota deis, caeco nec Erinyas ore rogavi.

exaudi miseram: genetrix te, saeve, precatur,

non pater; adde moram sceleri et metire quod audes.

sed pulsat muros germanus et impia contra

bella ciet? non mater enim, non obstat eunti

ulla soror: te cuncta rogant, hic plangimus omnes;

... tu limina avita deosque

linquis et a nostris in fratrem amplexibus exis? (Stat. *Theb.* 11.338–50, 352–3)

Unhappy me! Will you conquer? Nonetheless, before this it is necessary for you to try arms at home: I shall stand on the very threshold of the door, an ill-omened portent and huge image of crimes. You must trample this white hair, these breasts, wicked one, and drive your horse through your mother's womb. Spare! Why do you thrust me from your path with sword-hilt and shield? I have not sanctified funereal vows against you by the Stygian gods, nor summoned the Furies with blind voice. Hear your wretched mother! She beseeches you, savage youth, not your father; add delay to crime and measure your daring. But your brother beats at the walls and raises impious wars against you? Yes, for neither mother nor any sister blocks his path: all things entreat you, we all here lament ... Do you abandon your ancestral threshold and gods and go out against your brother from our embraces?

It does not strengthen her argument, however, that she is the very embodiment of the family's crimes (340) in her incestuous coupling with her own son Oedipus, a coupling that she threatens to repeat with another son here as she sends Eteocles from her embrace (*a nostris amplexibus*, 353). The failure of Jocasta's plea to Eteocles is implicit in her very rhetoric.

Staius then turns from mother to daughter and rehearses Antigone's appeal to Polynices from the summit of the Ogygian wall:⁴²

comprime tela manu paulumque hanc respice turrem
frater, et horrentes refer in mea lumina cristas!
agnoscisne hostes? sic annua pacta fidemque
poscimus? hi questus, haec est bona causa modesti
exulis? Argolicos per te, germane, penates
(nam Tyriis iam nullus honos), per si quid in illa
dulce domo, summitte animos: en utraque gentis
turba rogant ambaeque acies; rogat illa suorum
Antigone devota malis suspectaque regi,
et tantum tua, dire, soror ...

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(Stat. *Theb.* 11.363–72)

Check the weapons in your hand and look back at this tower for a little, brother, and turn back your bristling crest to my eyes! Do you recognize your enemy? Is this how we claim a yearly contract and good faith? Are these the complaints and good cause of a humble exile? By the Argive gods, brother (for there is now no honour in the Tyrians), by anything you hold sweet in that house, cast down your pride: look, a crowd of both peoples asks it and both battle-lines; Antigone too asks it, famous for her devotion to her family's ills, held suspect by the king, and sister only to you, dread man.

Like her mother, Antigone marshals her arguments precisely to invoke the social virtues of good faith, modesty, dignity, and religious and familial devotion. But her explicit reference to the brothers' annual pact and compromised *fides* undermines her case. Indeed, she herself must acknowledge Eteocles' priority in breaking faith and forswearing their compact:

... quid crimine solvis
germanum? nempe ille fidem et stata foedera rupit,
ille nocens saevusque suis; tamen ecce vocatus
non venit.

(Stat. *Theb.* 11.379–82)

Why do you absolve your brother of his crime? Surely he has broken his word and the set compacts, he is guilty and cruel to his family; yet, look, though summoned he has not come.

Antigone weakens Polynices' resolve by her appeal at the very juncture when the Fury Tisiphone finally prevails over his brother, wrenching Eteocles from his mother's embrace (11.387–8) and sending him out on to the battlefield to face his brother, fully living up (or rather down) to his bad faith (11.393):

"*tandem*," inquit, "*scis, saeve, fidem et descendis in aequum?*" ("At last," his brother said, "do you know your faith, savage one, and descend to the plain?") In Polynices' mouth, after the failed interventions of the brothers' loyal mother and sister, *fides* can mean only its opposite here, "faithlessness."⁴³

The brothers sink to unplumbed depths of treachery and broken faith on the field of combat, culminating in their exchange of fatal wounds. Yet unworthy as they undoubtedly are of their womenfolk's loyalty, one of them at least, Polynices, is the recipient of continuing pious fidelity from both sister and wife in the final book. Indeed, Statius thematizes the good faith of (almost) all the Argive women to their dead husbands in his moving account of their efforts to secure appropriate burial for their war dead in the final book of the epic.⁴⁴ The poet pointedly reverses the traditional gender conventions of Rome's reputation for military good faith when he styles the band of Argive women the "faithful train" from which Argia will separate herself (*ab agmine fido*, 12.183) to seek Polynices' corpse. But he reserves his strongest accolade for Argia in the trial of her husband's burial, as he shows her to be motivated by "a singular *fides*" to honour her dead spouse.⁴⁵

prima per attonitas nigrae regina catervae,
tristibus inlabens famulis iterumque resurgens,
quaerit inops Argia vias; non regia cordi,
non pater: una fides, unum Polynicis amati
nomen in ore sedet ...

(Stat. *Theb.* 12.111–15)

First among the stricken women, the queen of the dark band, leaning on her sad attendants and rising again, Argia helplessly seeks the way; she has no thought of palace or father in her heart; alone good faith, alone the name of her beloved Polynices remains on her lips.

Marked out by her single-minded devotion and faithfulness, and further motivated by piety and chaste love, Argia abandons the rest of the Argive wives to rescue her husband's corpse from the battlefield for burial:⁴⁶

tunc mouet arte dolum, quo semet ab agmine fido
segreget, inmitesque deos regemque cruentum
contemptrix animae et magno temeraria luctu
prouocet; hortantur pietas ignesque pudici.

(Stat. *Theb.* 12.183–6)

Then she plans a trick with skill, by which she might separate herself from the faithful train and, despising her life and bold from great grief, to challenge the harsh gods and cruel king; dutiful devotion and chaste love urge her on.

Argia thus emerges as the incarnation of uxorial fidelity in the epic,⁴⁷ and her later apostrophe to her dead husband underlines the reciprocity of that ideal (12.214–15): *et nunc me duram, si quis tibi sensus ad umbras, / me tardam Stygiis quereris, fidissime, divis* (“And now, most faithful husband, you complain that I am harsh, if you have any feeling in the underworld, and complain to the Stygian gods that I am slow”). Fittingly, moreover, Argia is supported in her singular devotion to her husband by a similarly loyal slave: on her difficult journey, the trustworthy Menoetes attends her as, Statius styles him, her “faithful supporter” (*fides altor*, 12.278–9) and “faithful comrade” (*fidus comes*, 12.405).⁴⁸

Argia’s secret flight to Thebes finds a historical counterpart at Rome in Valerius Maximus’ account of a certain Sulpicia, who eluded her mother’s guard to flee to her proscribed husband in Sicily:

Sulpicia autem, cum a matre Iulia diligentissime custodiretur, ne Lentulum Cruscellionem, virum suum proscriptum a triumviris, in Siciliam persequeretur, nihilo minus, famulari veste sumpta, cum duabus ancillis totidemque servis ad eum clandestina fuga pervenit. nec recusavit se ipsam proscribere ut ei fides sua in coniuge proscripto constaret. (Val. Max. 6.7.3)

Sulpicia was held in close custody by her mother Julia to prevent her following Lentulus Cruscellio, her husband proscribed by the Triumvirs, to Sicily. Nonetheless she reached him in a secret flight dressed as a slave along with two slave girls and as many slaves. She did not balk at proscribing herself in order to maintain her fidelity to her proscribed husband. (trans. Shackleton Bailey)

Like Sulpicia, Argia must devise a ruse to reach her husband, and she is accompanied by only a single slave; indeed Argia outdoes Sulpicia, in the paucity of her attendants and in the single-minded devotion that she displays for her dead husband. Proscription, after all, cannot compete with death. Moreover, the fictional Argia’s passage is as dangerous as that of her historical counterpart Sulpicia, for she stumbles through a battlefield littered with corpses, with her only companion Menoetes:⁴⁹

admonet attonitam fidus meminisse Creontis
altor et occulto summittere lampada furto.
 regina Argolicas modo formidata per urbes,
 votum inmane procis spesque augustissima gentis,
 nocte sub infesta, nullo duce et hoste propinquo,
 sola per offensus armorum et lubrica tabo
 gramina, non tenebras, non circumfusa tremescens
 concilia umbrarum atque animas sua membra gementes. (Stat. *Theb.* 12.278–85)

Her faithful supporter warns her in her distraction to remember Creon and lower her torch in secret stealth. The queen, once feared throughout the Argive cities, huge prayer of suitors and highest hope of her people, under the hostile night sky, without a guide and with the enemy near at hand, makes her lonely way, stumbling on weapons and grass slippery with gore; she fears not the shadows, nor the assembly of shades surrounding her, souls groaning for their lost limbs.

Aided by Juno and the moon, Argia identifies her husband's body by the cloak she had woven for him (12.312–15), now a bloodied token of her wifely devotion. Over his body, she laments her own part in orchestrating the war (12.336–7),⁵⁰ and after assuring him that she will bury his corpse, she promises him an eternal memorial of *fides* (12.346–8):⁵¹ ... *aeternumque tuo famulata sepulcro / durabit deserta fides, testisque dolorum / natus erit, paruoque torum Polynice fouebo* ("Forsaken loyalty will forever endure, serving your sepulchre, our son will be witness to these sorrows, and I shall cherish your bed with a small Polynices"). Statius' language is extraordinarily condensed here, and the *deserta fides* Argia invokes has multiple referents:⁵² not only the lack of *fides* between the Theban brothers and their ruptured *foedus*, but also Polynices' desertion of Argos and his Argive wife, and his family's apparent desertion of him in death. But it is precisely at this juncture that Argia encounters the one other woman who shares her own standard of loyalty to the dead Polynices – her sister-in-law Antigone.⁵³

Antigone upbraids her sister-in-law, whom she does not recognize, for daring the battlefield at night (12.366–7), but at Argia's invitation she makes common cause with her, upon learning their relationship:

si quid in hoc veteri bellorum sanguine mecum
quaesitura venis, si tu quoque dura Creontis
iussa times, possum tibi me confisa fateri.
si misera es (certe lacrimas lamentaque cerno),
iunge, age, iunge fidem: proles ego regis Adrasti
(ei mihi! num quis adest?) cari Polynicis ad ignes,
etsi regna vetant – . (Stat. *Theb.* 12.374–80)

If you come to seek something along with me in this old blood of battle, if you too fear Creon's harsh orders, I can trust you in confessing my identity. If you are wretched (and certainly I see your tears and laments), join, come, join faith: I am the child of king Adrastus (alas! Is anyone here?) at the pyre of my dear Polynices, though kingdoms forbid – .

Indeed, Argia trusts the unhappy Antigone, whom she does not recognize, with her identity even before inviting her to show her good faith, and

Antigone duly yields priority of grief to Argia (12.384–5): *cedo, tene, pudet heu! pietas ignaua sororis! / haec prior* – (“I yield, hold him, alas for shame! A sister’s duty is paltry! This has priority –”). The sisters-in-law thereby establish a counter-example of true *fides* on the very site of the brothers’ perversion of it. We are led to imagine that Argia and Antigone might form a sisterly bond akin to that of the quasi-fraternal bond established between Tydeus and Polynices.⁵⁴

In Statius’ dark mythological universe, however, the sisters’ fragile alliance cannot survive their discovery by Creon’s guards. Shackled, their right hands can perform no *iunctio dextrarum* in commemoration of their brief compact, and they abandon their earlier good faith and devotion to one another:⁵⁵

ambitur saeua de morte animosaque leti
 spes furit: haec fratris rapuisse, haec coniugis artus
 contendunt vicibusque probant: “ego corpus,” “ego ignes,”
 “me pietas,” “me duxit amor.” deposcere saeva
 supplicia et dextras iuvat insertare catenis.
 nusquam illa alternis modo quae reuerentia verbis ... (Stat. *Theb.* 12.456–61)

They are ambitious for a cruel death and brave hope of death maddens them: the one claims to have stolen her brother’s limbs, the other her husband’s, and in turn they win credence. “Devotion led me,” “Love me.” They demand the cruel penalty and help the guards put their right hands in chains. Nowhere now is that respect which once featured in their mutual exchanges ...

In a final irony, their very competition to prove good faith and devotion to Polynices’ corpse ultimately devolves into such hatred and anger that they rehearse the same discord that animated the Theban brothers’ relations (12.462–3): *iram odiumque putes; tantus discordat utrimque / clamor* (“you would think it anger and hatred, such great shouting arises from their conflict”).⁵⁶ This is a very dark view, indeed, of the possibility of re-establishing familial *fides* and political *foedus* in the aftermath of a civil war, and Theseus does not seem even to attempt it when he imposes order on Thebes after defeating Creon.

Throughout the *Thebaid*, Statius depicts a series of often well-intentioned wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters acting on good faith, trust, and loyalty in an effort to aid their male kin. The contrast between their intentions and the results, however, is stark, and the gulf between input and outcome vast; for the women ultimately manage only to secure the deaths of their husbands, brothers, sons, and fathers on the battlefield and the destruction of the political bonds of Greece beyond that. What are we to make, then, of Statius’

thoroughgoing explosion of *fides* and its goals, even among women, in the course of the epic? The reciprocal relationship of *fides* both within the domestic sphere of marriage and more broadly, as a social value, is transformed and perverted in the course of the *Thebaid* in ways that adumbrate the masculine preserve of *fides* in the political sphere. It is an open question how Statius' Flavian audience might have responded to his calamitous narrative of the clash of prodigious (female) and perverted (male) *fides* in a morally bankrupt society shattered by civil war.⁵⁷ Perhaps the dissolution of all the virtues, including every mark of *fides* and *foedus*, in the course of the *Thebaid* may be felt to cast doubt on the political efficacy of the Flavian emperors' restoration of public confidence in the institution of the principate after the civil wars of AD 68–9.⁵⁸ Yet it may also be possible to read the narrative of Theban disaster as implying the strongest possible contrast with Roman triumph, since the Flavian emperors accomplished so much, and so tangibly, in their restoration of the fabric of Roman society.⁵⁹ On either reading, we can appreciate how keenly attuned Statius is in the *Thebaid* to contemporary tensions animating the Flavians' interventions into Roman imperial discourse.

NOTES

My thanks to Antony Augoustakis, Emma Buckley, and Claire Stocks, for the original invitation to participate in the workshop on *fides* in Flavian literature, and for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the chapter. All remaining errors and infelicities are my own.

1 Pomeroy 2010b: 61.

2 I cite the text of Silius' *Punica* from Delz 1987. Translations throughout are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

3 On the passage, see Tipping 2010: 65–6 and Augoustakis in this volume. On *fides* in the Saguntine episode in *Punica* 2, see Pomeroy 2010b; on Hannibal's familial loyalty in *Punica*, see Bernstein 2008: 135–9.

4 I cite the text of Statius' *Thebaid* from Hill 1996.

5 On the passage, see Venini 1970: 32–4; Ganiban 2007: 158–9.

6 With heavy irony, Turnus echoes Anchises' encomium of Augustus' nephew Marcellus, *heu pietas, heu prisca fides inuictaque bello / dextera* (A. 6.878–9), thereby turning Augustan epic praise into Flavian epic denunciation. See Mulder 1954: 268, and Gervais 2017b: *ad loc.* On Hypsipyle's failure to protect Opheltis (*pietas haec magna fidesque!*, 5.627), see Augoustakis in this volume.

7 Like Pomeroy, Smolenaars 1994: 109 distinguishes between *pietas* as an index of familial relations ("not the most conspicuous quality in Labdacus' family, but

here reference is made to the lack of respect shown by Eteolcoes and Polynices towards their father”) and *fides* as an index of extra-familial relations: “The same holds true for *laesa fides*, which refers to the agreement between the two brothers to reign alternately over Thebes.”

- 8 On *Fides* in Rome, see Fears 1981, Piccaluga 1981, Freyburger 1986, and Nash 1988. On *Pietas*, see Fears 1981 and Danese, Lanciotti, and Raffaelli 1997.
- 9 Fears 1981: 901–2. Cf. Stocks in this volume.
- 10 Fears 1981: 902. On *Fides Publica*, see also Val. Max. 6.6.
- 11 Cf. Augoustakis (in this volume) on *fides* in the Lemnian episode.
- 12 Freyburger 1986: 167–95. Cf. Val. Max. 6.7, with Parker 1998.
- 13 Cf. Val. Max. 6.8, with Parker 1998.
- 14 In contextualizing Statius’ literary representation of family dynamics in the *Thebaid* against the shifting socio-cultural mores in the Flavian period, I am influenced by the recent work of Bernstein 2008, Augoustakis 2010, and Manioti 2016.
- 15 On the passage, see Heuvel 1932: 235–6.
- 16 Freyburger 1986: 167–76.
- 17 Note, however, his discussion of the *foedus* implied in the *dextrarum iunctio* of manumission: Freyburger 1986: 158–60.
- 18 Cf. Lovatt in this volume.
- 19 On the passage, and the important connection between the oracle, the god’s trustworthiness, and the promise of fertility of Adrastus’ daughters, see Heuvel 1932: 198; cf. Caviglia 1973: 132.
- 20 The commentators contrast Adrastus’ lack of a son (cf. 1.393, quoted above) with the “promise” (OLD s.v. *fides* 2a) of his two daughters’ fertility: see Mulder 1954: 126; Gervais 2017b: *ad loc.*
- 21 Val. Max. 6.7 retains the heading *de fide uxorum erga uiros*.
- 22 The etymology is accepted by Freyburger 1986: 81–95, 170–6 and Ernout-Meillet 1985: 233 s.v. *fides*, *ei f.* Cf. Maltby 1991: 237 s.v. *foedus* (2), who quotes Varro’s evidence that the etymology was exploited already by Ennius: *per hos (sc. fetiales) etiam nunc fit foedus, quod fidus Ennius scribit dictum* (Var. L. 5.86). Mulder 1954 and Gervais 2017b are silent on the implicit etymological connection here, as is Venini 1970: 105 on *Theb.* 11.380 (*nempe ille fidem et stat foedera rupit* ...), where Statius’ etymological wordplay underlines the semantic and thematic links between *fides* and *foedus*. Cf. 3.300–1, quoted below, where Statius employs the same wordplay in connection with the “marriage contract” (*genialia foedera*, 3.300) joining Harmonia, the daughter of Mars and Venus, to Cadmus, and with Venus’ loyalty (*cara fides*, 3.301) to her line. Snijder 1968: 141 notes the specificity of the marriage contract but does not comment on Statius’ etymological play with *fides* here.
- 23 For the elegiac lexicon, see Pichon 1966; cf. also Adams 1982.

- 24 On elegiac jealousy, see Caston 2012.
- 25 Cf. Freyburger 1986: 169–70, adducing evidence from the elegiac poets.
- 26 Freyburger 1986: 168–9.
- 27 Gervais 2017b: *ad* 2.364 and 2.369 notes that *fides* is the dominant theme of Tydeus' embassy to Eteocles; cf. Mulder 1954: 233–4. Indeed, the embassy explicitly contrasts the faithful heart (*pectore fido*, 2.364) of Polynices' brother-in-law Tydeus with the lack of good faith exhibited by Polynices' true brother Eteocles (2.388, 393, 462), who degrades the virtue of *fides* both rhetorically, in his speech to Tydeus (2.417, 425), and legally, by sending an ambush made up of *iuvenum fidos* (2.483) to kill his brother's ambassador, in a violation of the very *fida pax* (2.537) owed to an ambassador.
- 28 Cf. *Theb.* 5.69, where Venus has no pity for the Lemnians, her loyal husband's people: *nec fidi populum miserata mariti*. See Augoustakis in this volume.
- 29 Mars' first words (*O mihi bellorum requies et sacra voluptas, / unaque pax animo!*, "O Venus, my respite from wars and sacred pleasure, sole peace for my spirit!" 3.295–6) allude to the opening lines of the highly erotic hymn to Venus, with which Lucretius begins *De rerum natura* (*Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divumque voluptas, / alma Venus ...*, "mother of Aeneas' race, pleasure of men and gods, nurturing Venus," 1.1–2), a hymn which Lucretius concludes by celebrating the war god's erotic passion for the goddess of love.
- 30 On Domitian's moral program, and his assumption of the role of censor, see Suet. *Dom.* 8.3–4; cf. Cass. Dio 67.2–3, and Mart. *Epigr.* 5.8, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 9.6. See further Jones 1992a: 13 and D'Ambra 1993: 36–9.
- 31 On this scene, see Snijder 1968: 256–63.
- 32 Freyburger 1986: *dextrarum iunctio* (136–42), *receptio in fidem* (142–9), *clientela* and manumission (149–67), friendship and hospitality (177–96), and the marriage rite (167–76).
- 33 On Argia (and Antigone), see Bessone 2011: 200–23 and 2015; Korneeva 2011: 184–92; Manioti 2012 and 2016; Keith 2016: 254–62; and Augoustakis in this volume.
- 34 On Harmonia's necklace, see McNelis 2007: 50–75; Coffee 2009: 191–4; and Chinn 2011, all with further bibliography.
- 35 On the passage, see Micozzi 2007: 180–5 and Parkes 2012: 136–44, especially 139 *ad* 4.193 *perfidia coniunx*, and 140–1 *ad* 200–10, on the contrast between the faithful wife Argia and the faithless wife Eriphyle.
- 36 Cf. Smolenaars 1994: 373.
- 37 Parkes 2012: 91 contrasts Argia, "wholly devoted to her husband," and Polynices "torn between love for his wife, love for his family ... , love for power, and love for his home." As she observes, "these emotions are incompatible and he will end up losing everything."

- 38 I am not the only reader to see the potential for sexual overtones in the phrase *matris sinus*: cf. Hershkowitz 1998: 278, citing Adams 1982: 90–1, for the sexual valence of the vocabulary Statius employs here.
- 39 On this passage, see Augoustakis 2016c: 290–312.
- 40 On the simile, see Augoustakis 2016c: 296–8, with further bibliography; he notes the multiple points of contact between the simile describing the daughters of Pandion, metamorphosed into birds, and the situation, in *Thebaid* 8, of the daughters of Oedipus.
- 41 On the passage, see Venini 1970: 96–9; Augoustakis 2010: 65–6; and Ganiban 2007: 159–65.
- 42 On the passage, see Venini 1970: 101–8; Augoustakis 2010: 66–8; and Ganiban 2007: 166–7.
- 43 Cf. Venini 1970: 108 on 11.393: *tandem ... fidem*.
- 44 Eriphyllē is the lone faithless wife of *Thebaid*: cf. *perfida coniunx*, 4.193; *impia coniunx*, 12.123.
- 45 On the passage, see Pollmann 2004: 118–19.
- 46 On the passage, see Pollmann 2004: 134–5.
- 47 Cf. Pollmann 2004: 118. On *pietas* at 12.186 referring to the obligation of one spouse toward the other, cf. Ripoll 1998: 286–312.
- 48 On Menoetes, see Pollmann 2004: 138. She sees his role as purely formal and as a literary invention on Statius' part. Given the historical tradition of celebrating the deeds of exemplary wives and slaves, however, Statius may well be drawing not only on literary convention but also on historical *exempla*, especially with the conventions of civil war narratives: see further Parker 1998.
- 49 On the passage, see Pollmann 2004: 152–4. Pollmann also notes (159) that a recurrent scene-type in Statius' epic features women looking for corpses, as Argia does here. In this regard, Statius innovates in the epic tradition, "reversing Verg. *A.* 2.769–770, where Aeneas looks for Creusa."
- 50 Pollmann 2004: 168 suggests that Argia's responsibility for the war aligns her with Helen, the cause of the Trojan War in both Homer (*Il.* 3.125–8) and Virgil (*A.* 6.93–4).
- 51 In addition to Pollmann 2004: *ad loc.*, see Bessone 2011: 202–10 and Sacerdoti 2012: 145–8.
- 52 Pollmann 2004: 170.
- 53 On Argia and Antigone, see Bessone 2011: 210–18; Korneeva 2011; Maniotti 2012 and 2016; and Sacerdoti 2012: 148–50.
- 54 I thank Claire Stocks for this formulation. On the "brotherly" bond between Tydeus and Polynices, see Hill 1990: 111; Frings 1992: 47–53; Henderson 1998: 234–40; and Bernstein 2008: 79, with further bibliography.
- 55 On this scene, cf. Bessone 2011: 210–13. On Argia's important role in the epic, see also Korneeva 2011; Bessone 2015; Maniotti 2012 and 2016; and Newlands 2016.

- 56 Cf. Pollmann 2004: 195, who comments that the behaviour of Argia and Antigone at this juncture “seems rather similar to [that of] their brothers,” comparing their recognition of the brothers’ lingering *iras* (12.437) and *odia* (12.441).
- 57 I owe this formulation, with gratitude, to one of the readers for the press.
- 58 Cf. Ahl 1984.
- 59 Such is the interpretation of Braund 2006.

Haec Pietas, Haec Fides: Permutations of Trust in Statius' *Thebaid*

ANTONY AUGOUSTAKIS

As Claire Stocks has pointed out in her chapter, there is little doubt that *fides* becomes a buzzword for Flavian Rome, one that is exploited well by the newly established Flavian dynasty from the beginning, immediately after the civil strife of AD 69. Vespasian's objective is not only to consolidate the new regime but also to forge a connection with the Augustan past, given a particular desire to bypass the immediate and, to a certain degree, problematic Julio-Claudian memories.¹ The semantic range of the word in Latin is, of course, broad – as observed in various chapters in this volume – encompassing trust, tutelage, promise, guarantee, credibility, assurance, reliability, and loyalty.² In this chapter, I shall focus on the Nemean episode in Statius, where *fides* is frequently mentioned and can provide further insight to help us understand the term's complex nuances in the poem, nuances on which Alison Keith has already elaborated in her chapter. From the Nemean episode, I would like to move to the final book of the poem and look in particular at the three passages where *fides* is implored, all in relation to Argia. In this gendered reading of *fides* in the *Thebaid*, I aim to demonstrate that *fides* becomes easily manipulated and inane in the course of Statius' poem.³

Fides and Pietas: Silius' Punica and Statius' Thebaid

I would like to open with Silius Italicus' *Punica* and look at a passage that proves useful for our discussion of Statius' *Thebaid* and the creation of meaning for *fides* in the context of the Theban fratricide. At Hercules'

request, in *Punica* 2, the personified Fides fortifies the Saguntines, prolongs the renown of their death, and promises to follow them to the Underworld:

sed me pollutas properantem linquere terras
sedibus his tectisque Iovis succedere adegit
fecundum in fraudes hominum genus; impia liqui
et, quantum terrent, tantum metuentia regna
ac furias auri nec vilia praemia fraudum
et super haec ritu horrificos ac more ferarum
viventis rapto populos luxuque solutum
omne decus multaque oppressum nocte pudorem.
vis colitur, iurisque locum sibi vindicat ensis,
et probris cessit virtus. en, aspice gentes:
nemo insons: pacem servant commercia culpa. (Sil. 2.496–506)

But, when I hastened to leave the sin-stained earth, I was forced to settle here and change my habitation, because the human race was so fertile in wickedness; I fled from wicked kings, who themselves fear as much as they are feared, and the frenzy for gold, and the rich rewards of wickedness. I fled also from nations hateful in their customs and living by violence like wild beasts, where all honour is undermined by luxury, and where shame is buried in deep darkness. Force is worshipped, and the sword usurps the place of justice, and virtue has given place to crime. Behold the nations! No man is innocent; fellowship in guilt alone preserves peace.

As Neil Bernstein notes, when Fides exclaims “nemo insons” (506), “her insistence that human guilt is universal is similar to the verdict passed by Statius’ Jupiter when Bacchus supplicates him on behalf of the Thebans ... *et pietas et laesa fides* (*Theb.* 7.217), and Tiresias corroborates the god’s words by accusing his fellow Thebans of universal guilt (*Theb.* 10.610–11).⁴ What has not been noted, however, is that Fides also echoes Oedipus’ pronouncement to Theseus in Sophocles:

ΟΙ. ὦ φίλτατ’ Αἰγέως παῖ, μόνοις οὐ γίγνεται
θεοῖσι γῆρας οὐδὲ κατθανεῖν ποτε,
τὰ δ’ ἄλλα συγχεῖ πάνθ’ ὁ παγκρατὴς χρόνος.
φθίνει μὲν ἰσχὺς γῆς, φθίνει δὲ σώματος,
θνήσκει δὲ πίστις, βλαστάνει δ’ ἀπιστία,
καὶ πνεῦμα ταῦτόν οὐ ποτ’ οὔτ’ ἐν ἀνδράσιν
φίλοις βέβηκεν οὔτε πρὸς πόλιν πόλει.
τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἦδη, τοῖς δ’ ἐν ὑστέρω χρόνῳ
τὰ τερπνὰ πικρὰ γίγνεται κατ’ οὐκίαν. (Soph. OC 607–15).

OE. Dearest son of Aegeus, for the gods alone there is no old age and no death ever, but all other things are submerged by all-powerful time! The strength of the country perishes, so does the strength of the body, loyalty dies and disloyalty comes into being, and the same spirit never remains between friends or between cities, since for some people now and for others in the future happy relations turn bitter, and again friendship is restored.

The message is universal: *θήσκει δὲ πίστις, βλαστάνει δ' ἀπιστία* (611);⁵ like the cycle of human life, so friendship based on *πίστις* proves a fickle, temporary reality, Oedipus claims. Greek Thebes, Greco-Roman Saguntum, Roman Rome, all are subject to this truth, and Silius exploits the Greek intertexts from a play directly related to Thebes to establish an intertextual dialogue with his contemporary Statius, I submit.⁶ This speech becomes as an introductory window to the rather bleak, darker landscape and world that inspires Statius' *Thebaid*: for instance, *insons* is employed only three times by Statius: once for Arion, Polynices' horse (6.425–6); then in a simile, where Atys, the *Heldenknabe*, is compared to a lion that has not yet tasted blood (*etiamnum sanguinis insons*, 8.572–6); and finally in reference to the Ilissos (8.765–6), where Minerva goes to cleanse herself from the miasma of Tydeus' cannibalism.⁷ In other words, everyone involved in the civil war of Thebes is guilty except for the horse, the outsider Atys, and the goddess Minerva.

Moreover, Silius' *pacem seruant commercia culpae* is echoed in the *Thebaid* in manyfold ways: Menoeceus is *pacis servator*, after Virtus, another personified goddess, touches his heart and inspires his ensuing *devotio* (10.683–5), while the noun *commercium* occurs in the description of the Sphinx's dealings with each wretched passerby in Book 2 (511–12),⁸ in Amphiarus' effort to stop Lycurgus' action against Hypsipyle in Nemea in Book 5 (667–9), and in Tydeus' disparaging of Jocasta in Book 7, where *fides* also features prominently: *ubi tunc fidei pacisque sequestra / mater eras, pulchris cum me nox vestra morata est / hospitibus? nempe haec trahis ad commercia natum?* ("Where were you then, mother, broker of peace and faith, when your people's night detained me with such splendid hospitality? Such is the commerce, I suppose, to which you drag your son," 7.542–4).⁹

In Statius' *Thebaid*, as Keith has observed in her chapter in this volume, we find the personified Fides next to Pietas in Book 11 (95–101), as Tisiphone prods Megaera on to action that will lead to the fratricide. Pietas and Fides are irrelevant as long as the two Furies join forces, strongly expressed by the concessive clause *licet alma Fides Pietasque repugnent / vincentur* (98–9).¹⁰ But elsewhere in the poem, *pietas* and *fides* are also coupled, as Keith points out. First, as the indignant Tydeus disparages Eteocles who refuses to yield the throne:

ast horum miseret, quos sanguine viles
coniugibus natisque infanda ad proelia raptos
proicis excidio, bone rex. o quanta, Cithaeron,
funera sanguineusque vadis, Ismene, rotabis!
haec pietas, haec magna fides! nec crimina gentis
mira equidem duco: sic primus sanguinis auctor
incestique patrum thalami; sed fallit origo:
Oedipodis tu solus eras. haec praemia morum
ac sceleris, violente, feres. nos poscimus annum ... (Stat. *Theb.* 2.458–66)

but these I pity whose blood is cheap, whom you fling forth to their destruction, snatched from their wives and children into accursed battle, good king. What carnage, Cithaeron, and you, Ismenos, shall you roll in your bloody waters! This is brotherly love, this mighty faith! Nor do I wonder at the crimes of your race. Thus was the first author of your blood, thus the impure wedlock of your fathers. But the source deceives: you alone came of Oedipus. This, man of violence, is the reward you shall reap of your ways and your crime. We demand our year.

As François Ripoll observes, *fides* stands here for the *foedus regni* that has been violated by Eteocles.¹¹ Obviously, *fides* is a central theme in Tydeus' expedition to Thebes.¹² "Tydeus, whose heart is *fidus*, is sent to Thebes to test the *fides* of Eteocles (369), which he immediately recognizes as lost (*fides* both towards his brother ... and towards his subjects ...). Eteocles debases the idea in his speech ..., and also when he sends 483 *iuvenum fidos* to violate the *fida pax* (537) to which Tydeus, as *legatus*, is entitled. Finally, all that remains is the debased kind of *fides*: 'belief, proof,' not 'loyalty' ..., and even this fails."¹³ Furthermore, if we compare the pair *pietas* ~ *fides* here to Silius' evaluation of Scipio, are we not invited to imagine Polynices as Scipio, Eteocles as Hannibal?

stabant educti diversis orbis in oris,
quantos non alios vidit concurrere tellus
Marte viri dextraque pares, sed cetera ductor
anteibat Latius, melior pietate fideque. (Sil. 9.434–7)

There they stood, the two mightiest warriors that earth has ever seen meet in battle; reared in far distant lands, in prowess they were well matched; but otherwise the Roman was superior – in sense of duty and of honour.

The second occurrence is found in Book 7, when Jupiter justifies the punishment of the brothers on account of what he conceives as *laesa pietas* and *laesa fides*:

ast ego non proprio diros impendo dolori
 Oedipodionidas: rogat hoc tellusque polusque
 et pietas et laesa fides Naturaque et ipsi
Eumenidum mores.

(Stat. *Theb.* 7.215–18)

But I do not sacrifice the fell sons of Oedipus to my private wrath. Earth and heaven demand it, and piety and violated faith and Nature and the very morals of the Eumenides.

The reader is here invited to wonder whether there can be reparation of the harmed *fides* by means of fratricide, as Jupiter perversely suggests. As Ganiban observes, Jupiter's claim "is nowhere supported by his actions in the text."¹⁴ In her chapter, Keith correctly notes that the brothers' dispute "has not only ruptured the familial bonds of filial and fraternal *pietas* but has exploded the political landscape of Greece to redraw the shifting political alliances of myth." Statius reconceives *fides* to fit this narrative.

In her last effort to abort the fratricide, Antigone refers to *fides* and *foedera* (*sic annua pacta fidemque / poscimus?* "Is this how we claim yearly pact and good faith?" 11.365–6), by underscoring, however, the one brother's guilt: *nempe ille fidem et stata foedera rupit, / ille nocens saevusque suis* ("it was he, was it not, who broke faith and covenant agreed, he is guilty and cruel to his kin," 11.380–1). Of course, Antigone's success is momentary, and the brothers will face off in the gruesome scene of fratricide, where *fides*, *fidere* appear twice: first as Polynices wounds Eteocles and taunts him (*disce arta pati nec fidere laetis*, "learn to bear privations and not to trust happy times," 11.551), and then when Eteocles stealthily wounds Polynices, and the latter wonders how his treacherous brother is still alive (*vivisne an adhuc manet ira superstes, / perfide*, "Do you live? Or does your anger still remain, surviving you, traitor," 11.568–9).

The Nemean Interlude

With this framework in mind, let us now turn to Nemea, where we find the collocation of *pietas* and *fides* once again. In Nemea, Statius' Argive expedition is temporarily stalled, as the court of King Lycurgus becomes the playground where the fratricidal war between Oedipus' sons is rehearsed: the neglected Opheltes dies, a civil war is stopped at the last minute, and burial is granted to the baby boy, in a foreshadowing of the eventual burial of the Argives at the end of the poem, even though Statius denies the closural act at the end.¹⁵ Recent studies have focused on the dark overtones of the poem, highlighting the prevalence of *nefas* as a keyword, as well as of *providentia*

and *clementia* for the resolution of the miasma in the end,¹⁶ I would like to note that I am proposing here a pluralistic reading of the *Thebaid* as well, without necessarily undermining the ubiquitous pessimistic overtones.¹⁷ The Underworld and the Furies take over the nefarious landscape of Thebes and chart an irreversible path toward the abomination of the fratricide in the second half.

Many critics have associated the Lemnian digression in *Thebaid* 5, Hypsipyle's "narrative," with the war in Thebes, and, in such interpretations, the occurrence of *fides* functions as a signpost in the narrative that foreshadows its semantic permutations in the poem.¹⁸ As the thirsty Argive soldiers are led to the waters of Langia by the former queen of Lemnos, Hypsipyle, they are regaled by a long narrative, as she "quenches" their curiosity. Hypsipyle's narrative includes the horrific slaughter on Lemnos, the concealed salvation of her father, Thoas, and her subsequent exile to Nemea. The first occurrence of *fides* in Book 5 points to the conspiracy formed among the maddened Lemnian women in a grove:

tunc viridi luco (late iuga celsa Minervae
propter opacat humum niger ipse, sed insuper ingens
mons premit et gemina pereunt caligine soles),
hic sanxere fidem. tu Martia testis Enyo
atque inferna Ceres, Stygiaeque Acheronte recluso
ante preces venere deae; sed fallit ubique
mixta Venus, Venus arma tenet, Venus admovet iras. (Stat. *Theb.* 5.152–8)

Then in a green grove that broadly shades the ground close to Minerva's high hill, dark itself, but upon it the great mountain presses down and the suns perish in a double murk – here they pledged their faith. Martian Enyo was witness and Ceres of the Underworld, the Stygian goddesses came before they were invoked, Acheron was opened; but Venus was everywhere, mingling though unseen, Venus holds the weapons, Venus brings the wrath.

The Lemnian *fides* points to the organization of a group of fellow conspirators, as the women overturn the island's hierarchy.¹⁹ Statius' scene recalls variously Valerius' description of the metamorphosed Venus, raging through the city, spreading false rumours, which are then believed by the mass of crazed Lemnian women:

totam inde per urbem
personat, ut cunctas agitent expellere Lemno,
ipsi urbem Thressaeque regant. dolor iraque surgit.

obvia quaeque eadem traditque auditque, neque ulli
 vana fides. tum voce deos, tum questibus implent,
 oscula iamque toris atque oscula postibus ipsis
 ingeminant lacrimisque iterum visuque morantur.
 prosiliunt nec tecta virum thalamosque revisunt
 amplius; adglomerant sese nudisque sub astris
 condensae fletus acuunt ac dira precantur
 coniugia et Stygias infanda ad foedera taedas.

(V. Fl. 2.163–73)

Next through the whole city she cries aloud, that the men are plotting to drive them one and all from Lemnos, that they and their Thracian women may rule the city. The tides of jealous rage and anger begin to rise. And all as they met one another passed on and heard again the same story, nor did her belief seem unfounded to anyone.²⁰ Then they call upon the gods with shrill lament, and now on their beds, now on the very door-posts they shower kisses, and then again they tarry to weep and to look back. Forth they rush and seek no more their husbands' roof and the bridal chamber; together they throng, and close-packed beneath the naked stars wail ever louder, calling down curses on these weddings and the fires of hell on these monstrous unions.

As the news spread, the conspiracy among the women grows, trusting what they hear and what is handed down to them, but in Valerius, there is special emphasis on the forming of the group not through ritual oath, as in Statius (*sanxere fidem*),²¹ but through ritual lament (*sub astris ... fletus*).

Soon, Statius' Hypsipyle builds a fake pyre in the midst of the house, allegedly to burn her father's remains. Her astuteness wins credence and results in her assumption of the duties of queen:

ipsa quoque arcanis tecti in penetralibus alto
 molior igne pyram, sceptrum super armaque patris
 inicio et notas regum velamina vestes,
 ac prope maesta rogum confusis crinibus asto
 ense cruentato, fraudemque et inania busta
 plango metu, si forte premam, cassumque parenti
 omen et hac dubios leti precor ire timores.
 his mihi pro meritis, ut falsi criminis astu
 parta fides, regna et solio considerare patris
 (supplicium!) datur. anne illis obsessa negarem?
 accessi, saepe ante deos testata fidemque
 immeritasque manus; subeo (pro dira potestas!)
 exsanguie imperium et maestam sine culmine Lemnon.

(Stat. *Theb.* 5.313–25)

I too in the secret recesses of our dwelling build a high-flaming pyre and cast thereon my father's sceptre and arms and his well-known garments, the dress of kings. In sadness with disordered hair and bloody sword I stand near and fearfully lament the cheat, the empty mound, hoping to cover up; and I pray that the omen bring no harm to my parent and that doubting fears of his death be so discharged. For these merits, when the trick of a false crime won credence, it was given me to reign and sit upon my father's throne – punishment! So beset, was I to refuse them? I agreed, but only after calling often on the gods and the truth and my innocence. I take on (ah dire authority!) a bloodless power, a Lemnos sad and headless.

Hypsipyle secures her fellow conspirators *fides* by means of a trick (*astus*). Hypsipyle's *astus* recalls, by means of a negative intratextual allusion, Maeon's denial of *astus* in surviving Tydeus' ambush: *non hanc lacrimis meruisse nec astu / crudelem ueniam atque inhonoraе munera lucis* ("... not by tears or cunning did I win this cruel favor, the gift of inglorious life," 3.65–6).²² While the Lemnian women bind their *nefas* through *fides*, Hypsipyle fashions her narrative to underscore her innocence and seeming lack of participation in the folly perpetrated by the others: she refuses to kill her father and devises the *astus*, which then figuratively "gives birth" to *fides*.²³ Hypsipyle agrees to be the new appointed leader, queen, which she considers a *supplicium*. Then lines 323–4 present a puzzle, in terms of the connotations of *fides* and its construal: *saepe ante deos testata fidemque / immeritasque manus*. How are we to imagine the scene? Is Hypsipyle declaring to the other women that she is innocent? Such an interpretation would not suit the context here and does not make adequate sense. Or is she doing this privately in the presence of the statues of the gods (*ante deos*)? Does *fides* betoken "truth," as Shackleton Bailey's translation indicates? If so, what truth is this, that she spared her father? Or is it good faith, in the rendering of A.L. Ritchie,²⁴ thus implying that the heroine declares her good faith to the Lemnian women? In this case, however, *immeritas manus* must not mean "guilty hands" but rather "unworthy," according to Barth's gloss in his commentary, a common expression of *recusatio*: *immeritas manus: robur meum, impar ferendo huic honeri*. Could it be that Hypsipyle combines two thoughts in one sentence, that before the gods she declares her innocence and before the women her inability? If we accept this solution, though, why would the heroine need to make such a declaration before the gods, who would already know that she is innocent? And if she is simply declaring to the other Lemnians her good faith, then she is once again lying to them. This complication of meaning for *fides* indicates that the polysemantic noun intentionally becomes a fickle concept in Hypsipyle's narrative,

manipulated to fit whatever context and nuance she wants to add to her own version of the story as presented to the soldiers. Consider, for instance, that here she swears by the gods, and later on she invokes (*testor*) the ashes of her own people to corroborate her statement that she entered into a union with Jason *non sponte*, unwillingly:

cineres Furiasque meorum
testor ut externas non sponte aut crimine taedas
attigerim (scit cura deum), etsi blandus Iason
virginibus dare vincla novis: sua iura cruentum
Phasin habent, alios, Colchi, generatis amores. (Stat. *Theb.* 5.454–8)

I swear by the ashes and Furies of my kin, it was not by my will or guilt that I kindled stranger torches (the gods care and know), though Jason had charm to capture young maidens. Bloody Phasis has its own laws; other are the loves you Colchians engender.

Hypsipyle's untrustworthiness as a narrator comes to the fore in this, her latest evocation: the reader cannot help but wonder in this case whose ashes Hypsipyle invokes. Does she invoke the remains of the Lemnian men? Surely not, since this would be highly ironic! And she could not possibly evoke the ashes of Thoas, because the pyre was a fake one, and she has let us know from the very beginning. Thus, *testor* loses its value and serves only as an empty word to support Hypsipyle's own version of the events on Lemnos and help her buttress her self-portrayal as a victim (*non sponte*).²⁵

Then the island returns to normalcy through matriarchy, but the arrival of the Argonauts upsets the Lemnian women, especially since this is but a brief stop on their voyage: their departure constitutes a step back, as the Minyans break the pact, Hypsipyle claims, and unrest returns to the island. Just like Aeneas, Jason proves *perfidus*, abandoning Hypsipyle and his unborn children, as he sails away in search of the Golden Fleece:

inde fugam Minyae, sociosque appellat Iason
efferus, o utinam iam tunc mea litora rectis
praetervectus aquis, cui non sua pignora cordi,
non promissa fides; certe stat fama remotis
gentibus: aequorei redierunt vellera Phrixi. (Stat. *Theb.* 5.471–5)

The Minyae long to go and Jason calls on his comrades – the brute; would that he had sailed straight past my shores in the first place, uncaring for his children and pledged word! To be sure his fame stands among distant nations, the fleece of sailor Phrixus has returned.

Hypsipyle learns a hard lesson when it comes to *fides*: she remains faithful and loyal to her father, but she disobeys the dire pact of the Lemnian women. When she finds out that baby Opheltes has been killed by a snake, she breaks down in a long lament, where she exclaims that she has paid a heavy price for the *pietas* and *fides* exhibited on Lemnos:

nosco deos: o dira mei praesagia somni
nocturnique metus, et numquam impune per umbras
attonitae mihi visa Venus! quos arguo divos?
ipsa ego te (quid enim timeam moritura fateri?)
exposui Fatis. quae mentem insania traxit?
tantane me tantae tenuere obliviae curae?
dum patrios casus famaeque exorsa retracto
ambitiosa meae (pietas haec magna fidesque!),
exsolvi tibi, Lemne, nefas.

(Stat. *Theb.* 5.620–8)

I recognize the gods. Ah dire presages of my slumber, terrors of the night, and Venus, who never in the darkness appeared to my startled eyes save to my cost! What gods do I accuse? It was I myself – I am to die, so why fear to confess? – who exposed you to the Fates. What madness drew my mind? Could such forgetfulness of such a charge take hold of me? As in my vanity I rehearsed the story of my country and the tale of my renown (such sense of duty, such fidelity!), I paid you, Lemnos, the crime I owed.

The display of *pietas* and *fides*²⁶ are inevitably accompanied by *nefas* in Hypsipyle's mind, especially since *fides*, "the tie which binds those who have a reciprocal relationship with one another outside familial contexts,"²⁷ becomes violated by *astus*, treachery and lies, and ultimately has to be expiated by death. Hypsipyle recognizes the gods, admitting she has endangered the baby and exposed it to death and the Fates. Her repetition of the words of Tydeus to Eteocles, as we saw in Book 2 above, *haec pietas haec magna fides*, is startling. Tydeus' sarcastic apostrophe can be variously interpreted when pronounced by Hypsipyle: this is bitterly ironic, as Hypsipyle invites us, her audience, to ponder the permutations of fate, *fides*, and *pietas*: they have now become *crimen* and *nefas*. At the same time, her pronouncement can also be commentary regarding the divine retribution, or even the very existence of the divine.

A Concluding Narrative? *Thebaid* 12

If we follow my reading of a gendered aspect of *fides*, then how are we to interpret the appearance of the word three times in the final book? If

Hypsipyle's use of the word admittedly complicates the multifaceted *fides* as a reciprocal relationship that leads to *nefas* in that case, then is the proper meaning of the word resurrected in the final book in the case of Argia and Antigone?²⁸ *Fides* first occurs when we encounter Argia as a distraught woman among the Argive *supplices*:

prima per attonitas nigrae regina catervae,
tristibus illabens famulis iterumque resurgens,
quaerit inops Argia vias; non regia cordi,
non pater: una fides, unum Polynicis amati
nomen in ore sedet; Dircen infaustaue Cadmi
moenia posthabitis velit incoluisse Mycenis. (Stat. *Theb.* 12.111–16)

First among the distraught, Argia, queen of the black troop, sinking upon her sorrowing handmaidens and rising again, helplessly seeks her way. She cares not for palace or father. She has one loyalty; one name, her beloved Polynices, is on her lips. She would fain leave Mycenae and dwell by Dirce in Cadmus' ill-omened city.

By means of the negations *non regia cordi*, / *non pater*, the poet underscores Argia's desire to switch countries (*patriae*): she no longer belongs in Mycenae and Argos, but Thebes. The anaphora in polyptoton *una fides, unum Polynicis amati* / *nomen* strikes as particularly bathetic and pathetic: its objective is to celebrate conjugal love and its power to conquer and transgress temporal and geographical boundaries.

When Argia comes across Polynices' body on the battlefield, her mission seems accomplished:

... peracta
spes longinqua viae: totos invenimus artus.
ei mihi, sed quanto descendit vulnus hiatu!
hoc frater? qua parte, precor, iacet ille nefandus
praedator? vincam volucres (sit adire potestas)
excludamque feras; an habet funestus et ignes?
sed nec te flammis inopem tua terra videbit:
ardebis lacrimasque feres quas ferre negatum
regibus, aeternumque tuo famulata sepulcro
durabit deserta fides, testisque dolorum
natus erit, parvoque torum Polynice fovebo. (Stat. *Theb.* 12.339–48)

... The distant hope of my journey is accomplished. I have found his body whole. Woe is me, but how deep this gaping wound! Did a brother do this? Where, I pray, does

that villainous robber lie? Given access, I shall outdo the birds and shut out the wild beasts. Or does the murderer actually have a pyre? But you too your land shall not see destitute of flame. You shall burn and win tears not to be won by kings. Forsaken loyalty shall forever endure, serving your sepulchre. Our son shall be witness to my sorrows; with a little Polynices I shall warm my bed.

Though *deserta*, Argia's *fides* will be kept alive for as long as revenge takes.²⁹ As Keith notes in the preceding chapter, her language has many referents: "not only the lack of *fides* between the Theban brothers and their ruptured *foedus*, but also Polynices' desertion of Argos and his Argive wife, and his family's apparent desertion of him in death." It may not be a coincidence that *testis* occurs again in this context. And yet, it is not the gods who will survey any wrongdoing and distribute punishment, but rather Argia's son: Thessander and the Epigonoï will certainly come, and Argia sees a continuity and a future, which is open to interpretation, whether pessimistic or optimistic. But is Argia not also repeating Hypsipyle's aborted efforts to keep a memory alive by means of a child, a baby? Opheltēs, the substitute for the lost children at Lemnos, now becomes Thessander. As Argia has her doublets in the poem, as shown recently by Tatiana Korneeva,³⁰ so does Hypsipyle apparently, and *fides* becomes an intriguing concept that is very much pliable and fickle, as we saw in the Lemnian nurse's case.

The final occurrence of *fides* is found soon after the passage above. Antigone arrives, and Argia is ready to share in *fides* with her sister-in-law, at least temporarily:

"si quid in hoc veteri bellorum sanguine mecum
quaesitura venis, si tu quoque dura Creontis
iussa times, possum tibi me confisa fateri.
si misera es (certe lacrimas lamentaque cerno),
iunge, age, iunge fidem: proles ego regis Adrasti
(ei mihi! num quis adest?) cari Polynicis ad ignes,
etsi regna vetant." stupuit Cadmeia virgo
intremuitque simul dicentemque occupat ultro:
"mene igitur sociam (pro fors ignara!) malorum,
mene times? mea membra tenes, mea funera plangis.
cedo, tene, pudet heu! pietas ignava sororis!
haec prior." hic pariter lapsae ...

(Stat. Theb. 12.374–85)

"If you come to seek something along with me in this stale blood of warfare, if you too fear Creon's harsh commands, I can trust you and confess myself. If you are unhappy – and assuredly I perceive tears and lamentation – join, come, join faith. I

am the child of king Adrastus – alas, is anyone here? – at the pyre of my beloved Polynices, though kingdoms forbid.” The Cadmean maiden was amazed and trembled to boot; she breaks in upon the speaker: “Do you fear me then (ah ignorant chance!), me, the partner in your woes? My limbs you hold, my corpse you bewail. I yield, hold him. Alas, for shame! A sister’s piety is but a poor thing. This has first place.” Here both collapse.

The phrase *iunge fidem* invites Antigone’s *pietas ignava sororis*.³¹ Argia had reached the body first after all. As the reader is invited to visualize the two girls working together, the seeds of strife and competition are there to cancel immediately the possibility of such a reading. They are ready to work for a common purpose. *Pietas* and *fides* return in the poem to co-exist, or rather the former yields to the latter, in a sense. As Keith notes, “the sisters-in-law thereby establish a counter-example of true *fides* on the very site of the brothers’ perversion of it.” Soon, however, the two will fight over who is the true doer of the action, when they both claim responsibility for burying Polynices. Here *fides* is associated with the burning of a corpse, Polynices, which would have made Argia and Antigone a harmonious pair, unlike Eteocles and Polynices, but they end up fighting again: even piety can create strife in the *Thebaid*.

In this chapter, I have discussed and underscored the problematics of a gendered *fides* in the *Thebaid*. The politically loaded term amply interrogates the intentions of the imperial regime to safeguard various hierarchies. I essentially agree with Sylvie Franchet d’Espèrey’s assessment that peace is possible after the war, but it is up to the man, “et notamment au prince,”³² to resolve violence and conflict. And yet, Theseus exhibits no *pistis*, no *fides*, but rather could and might exercise *clementia*, and I believe it is up to us and our various readings of the poem to decide whether he is indeed *clemens* enough.

NOTES

- 1 See Stocks in this volume, in particular note 1 on Flavian coinage with *Fides Publica* and note 2 on *Fides Exercituum*.
- 2 See the thirteen entries in the *OLD* s.v. *fides* and *TLL* VI.1 661.69–691.68; Freyburger’s 1986 study remains an invaluable reference work. It would be an oversimplification to say that the Latin *fides* corresponds to the Greek πίστις, but in Euripides’ *Phoenissae*, it is telling that we find the word juxtaposed to σπονδαί (*foedus*), a common association in Latin as well (Freyburger 1986: 81–4, 236–9): Polynices tells his mother that her πίστις brought him back to Thebes (ἐν δέ μ’ ὠφέλει, / σπονδαί τε καὶ σὴ πίστις, ἥ μ’ ἐσήγαγεν / τείχῃ πατρῶα, “only one

thing benefits me, our truce and your trustworthiness. It is this that has brought me into my father's walls," 364–6). Consider, for instance, that Hannibal is perfidious, as he does not keep the various *foedera* with the Romans, but rather chooses to break them one after another. Heinze 1928 discusses the lack of parallelism between the Greek πίστις and the Latin *fides*, which seems to be incorporating the Greek δικαιοσύνη.

- 3 I cite the Latin text of Statius' *Thebaid* from Hill 1996; for Silius, I use Delz 1987; for Euripides, Kovacs 2002; and for Sophocles, Lloyd-Jones 1994. Translations have been modified from Shackleton Bailey 2003 and Duff 1934 for Statius and Silius, respectively.
- 4 Bernstein 2017: 223. Cf. the pairing of *fides* and *pietas* by Hamilcar at Sil. 13.746, discussed in the chapter by Keith in this volume, and see also the analysis on *fides* in the *Punica* in the chapter by Marks; see also Hellegouarc'h 1972: 276–9 on the pairing of the two in Latin literature in general.
- 5 See Markantonatos 2007: 173.
- 6 While we cannot establish a firm connection for the date of composition of the *Thebaid* and the *Punica*, there is little doubt that both poets are concerned with issues of *fides*, and in particular with *fides* gone awry.
- 7 See Augoustakis 2016c: 275 and 354–6.
- 8 See Gervais 2017b: 250.
- 9 Coffee 2009: 256 discusses extensively the use of language here to describe mercantile, commercial activity that involves perpetrating violence.
- 10 Ganiban 2007: 158, 172.
- 11 Ripoll 1998: 290: "La *fides* renvoie au *foedus regni* violé par Etéocle: c'est l'aspect positif et juridique du lien entre les frères; la *pietas* représente le lien d'affection familiale qui eût dû naturellement les unir, lien lui aussi brisé par une haine mutuelle qui transgresse les lois de la nature autant que les conventions légales."
- 12 Gervais 2017b: 201: *fides/fidus* appears ten times; cf. Keith's discussion in the preceding chapter.
- 13 Gervais 2017b: 201.
- 14 Ganiban 2007: 108.
- 15 On the Nemea episode, see Augoustakis 2010: 37–61, which work includes an extensive bibliography, as well as most recently Soerink 2014b; Walter 2014: 208–34; Heslin 2016; and Nugent 2016.
- 16 E.g., Ripoll 1998; Braund 1996, and 2006; Franchet d'Espèrey 1999; Bessone 2011; Putnam 2016; and Gervais 2017b.
- 17 E.g., Dietrich 1999; Keith 2000; Ganiban 2007; Coffee 2009; Augoustakis 2010 and 2018; Lovatt 2013: 373–4, and 2016.
- 18 Vessey 1973: 170–87; Ganiban 2007: 71–95; Augoustakis 2010: 37–61; Gervais 2015.

- 19 Cf. TLL VI.1 671.35–76: *de eo promisso, quod, ad quandam societatem, pacem, foedus sim. pertinet.*
- 20 See Poortvliet 1991: 114 on the meaning of the expression *vana fides* with the dative, following Virg. *A.* 4.12. Cf. Spaltenstein 2002: 353.
- 21 Nugent 2016: 184 notes the use of active verbs to juxtapose the Lemnians with Hypsipyle's passivity.
- 22 In addition, the noun *astus* aligns Hypsipyle with other figures in the poem who employ such tricks: Tydeus in the games in Book 6 (*iam tunc astu deducit in aequum / callidus et celsum procurvat Agyllea Tydeus, / summissus tergo et genibus vicinus harenae*, "already crafty Tydeus artfully brings Agylleus down to level and bends his height forward, stooping his own back, knees close to the sand," 851–3) and Tisiphone in Book 9 (... *in medios astu subit impia campos / Tisiphone* ... , "craftily Tisiphone enters the midst of the field ... ," 149–50); see Dewar 1991: 89.
- 23 Ganiban 2007: 88: "The perversion of the moral world of Lemnos is made clear. Hypsipyle's *crimen* is that she did not kill her father, but rather dared an act of *pietas*. As a result, that which was before a speakable (and praiseworthy) deed now becomes the unspeakable."
- 24 Hall, Ritchie, and Edwards 2007: 89.
- 25 Augoustakis 2010: 51–2.
- 26 Soerink 2014a: 187: "an exclamation loaded with bitter εἰρωνεία."
- 27 Pomeroy 2010b: 61.
- 28 On Argia and Antigone in *Thebaid* 12, see Augoustakis 2010: 80–5 with bibliography and most recently Korneeva 2011: 184–92; Bessone 2015; and Manioti 2016. Cf. also Keith in this volume.
- 29 See Pollmann 2004: 170 on the touch of reproach.
- 30 Especially a doublet in Antigone; see Korneeva 2011: 184–92, and cf. Manioti 2016 on Argia as the replacement for Ismene.
- 31 Pollmann 2004: 176–8.
- 32 Franchet d'Espèrey 1999: 415.

Trust and Mistrust in the *Achilleid*

DÁNIEL KOZÁK

The culminating point of the narrative in Statius' unfinished *Achilleid* is reached when Achilles, after living in disguise as a girl on Scyros, finally drops the female dress, seizes the shield and the spear (the devices of Ulysses' trickery), and stands there "naked, wearing arms only" (*nudis ... in armis*, 1.891). At this supposed moment of truth, something miraculous happens as part of the hero's epiphany:

iam clipeus breviorque manu consumitur hasta –
mira fides – Ithacumque umeris excedere visus
Aetolumque ducem: tantum subita arma calorque
Martius horrenda confundit luce penates. (Stat. *Ach.* 1.879–82)

His hand devours the shield and shortened spear (a miracle to believe), and his shoulders seem taller than the Ithacan and Aetolian captains; with so fearsome a light do the sudden weapons and martial ardour confound the dwelling.¹

The spear (and perhaps also the shield) shrink as Achilles grabs them, and the young hero seems suddenly taller than Ulysses and Diomedes in the eyes of the bystanders, blinded, as it were, by the light of the weapons and the "martial ardour." The miracle is thus announced twice in a row: first "objectively" by the omniscient narrator, then "subjectively," focalized through the characters. These two announcements are separated by the narrator's comment *mira fides* ("a miracle to believe"),² which brilliantly captures the nature of miracles. We either have to trust our eyes if we are present when a miracle happens, or trust a narrator if we are absent, but either way faith rather than any more concrete evidence is the crucial element in the perception of a miracle.

Fides in the sense the narrator uses the word in line 880, broadly understood as the assumption that appearances and words match an underlying reality,³ is a central issue in the *Achilleid*. In the only complete book of the epic, the main plot is constructed around a series of deceptions. First Thetis deceives Chiron to get her son back, then Lycomedes is tricked into welcoming Achilles, now disguised as a girl. Ulysses and Diomedes also deceive the king of Scyros, pretending they are on a reconnaissance mission to Troy, to get access to the palace where they suspect the young hero is hiding, and finally they succeed in tricking Achilles into revealing himself. The poetic world of the *Achilleid* is full of lies and tricks,⁴ and consequently also full of people who either naively put too much trust in others or abuse the trust others have put in them.

It is against this background, I think, that it is worthwhile to look at how and when the terminology of *fides* and related words is used in the *Achilleid* to characterize human relationships. First I will focus on the public, political sphere, including both the international relations and internal affairs of Greece (and also how these two relate to each other), and then look at *fides* in the private sphere, in the family of Achilles, concentrating on the young hero as the subject and object of trust. As I will try to show, Statius presents a very problematic and rather cynical picture of *fides* in the *Achilleid*: it is both a rhetorical tool used successfully in the political sphere by heroes like Agamemnon and Ulysses, and a genuine feeling felt by those who are easily deceived (Chiron and Lycomedes). Different problems of *fides* arise in the case of Achilles, who enters the poem as a child unable to trust his mother, and then develops and breaks a number of trust-relationships – with Deidamia, most importantly – during the course of the unfinished poem. I will conclude with some remarks on how the presentation of *fides* in the *Achilleid* might influence our reading of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad*.

***Foedus Phrygium* and Agamemnon's Building of a New Greece**

While Thetis is concerned with hiding her son, the Greeks are already planning war against Troy. The military and political preparations are the main subject of the Aulis episode (1.397–559).⁵ The narrator forthwith states that wrath over Helen's rape is justified, but then the picture seems to become more complex:

interea meritos ultrix Europa dolores
 dulcibus armorum furiis et supplice regum
 conquestu flammata movet; quippe ambit Atrides

ille magis, cui nupta domi, facinusque relatu
 asperat Iliacum: captam sine Marte, sine armis
 progeniem caeli Spartaëque potentis alumnam,
 iura, fidem, superos una calcata rapina.

Hoc foedus Phrygium, haec geminae commercia terrae?

Quid maneat populos, ubi tanta iniuria primos
 degrassata duces?

(Stat. *Ach.* 1.397–406)

Meanwhile avenging Europe sets righteous wrath astir, aflame with sweet fury of arms and suppliant complaint of kings. For Atreus' son, whose wife is still at home, he canvasses the more and hones Ilium's crime in the telling. Heaven's progeny, he says, nursling of mighty Sparta, is taken prisoner without war or weapons; laws, good faith, and the High Ones trampled in a single larceny. Such is the Phrygian compact, such the commerce of two continents! What should the peoples expect, when so foul an outrage has descended on their leaders?

Greece – “Europe,” by way of hyperbole – turns anger into war (*dolores ... movet*, 397–9; cf. the standard expression *bellum movere*), not only to take just revenge for a crime, but also ignited by the sweet fury of arms (*dulcibus armorum furiis*, 398).⁶ the Greeks actually enjoy going to war. Furthermore, both Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon as kings (*regum*, 398) are asking for their help, but it is the latter who is more eager to start war. It is made clear already at this point that Agamemnon has his own political agenda, as also suggested by the narrator's use of *ambit* in line 399: Agamemnon is not only “traveling around” Greece, but also practising *ambitio* as a politician would to get elected to an office. Statius will later answer the question of what kind of office he is trying to reach.

We can listen to Agamemnon's words, indirectly at least, in lines 401–6 and feel his rhetoric. By kidnapping Helen, a divine offspring, Paris has violated a number of basic values, and *fides* is one of them: as Agamemnon puts it, “laws, good faith and the gods have been trampled upon in a single kidnapping” (*iura, fidem, superos una calcata rapina*, 403). Already here we can sense Agamemnon's strategy of exaggeration, anticipated by the narrator in lines 400–1. Not only has the law of hospitality (*ius hospitii*) been violated, he claims, but laws in general; and not just Jupiter (as the god of hospitality and also Helen's divine father), but gods in general.⁷ The line ending also suggests the gravity of the crime through a metaphor that seems to suggest a kind of Gigantomachy:⁸ even the gods, who as *superi* should be above us, have been “trampled upon” (*calcata*). This vertical imagery of evil doing recurs in lines 405–6, where *iniuria* affects its victims from above: Agamemnon expresses worry about the fate of ordinary people at the “bottom of

society" in light of the "outrage which descended upon their leaders" (*tanta iniuria primos degrassata duces*), and even on the gods, as stated in line 403.

The expression *fides ... calcata* also seems to be chosen carefully to convey the gravity of the crime. The verb *calcare* is collocated twice with *foedus* rather than *fides* in Flavian epic. Eteocles' breaking of his agreement with Polynices is referred to by Aletes as "a treaty trampled upon" (*foederis calcati*, *Theb.* 3.208), and Hannibal also imagines how his son will follow him in fighting Rome "by breaking the treaty" (*calcato foedere*, *Sil.* 3.85). In later Roman literature, the same metaphor occurs twice in Apuleius (*Met.* 5.12, 9.26.5). "To trample upon a treaty" thus seems to constitute a common metaphor, and *fidem calcare* in the *Achilleid* may be read as its variant, a variant that again raises the rhetorical stakes: not just a specific treaty, but *fides* in general has been trampled upon.⁹

As for the asyndetic series *iura, fidem, superos*, two important intertexts in Flavian epic, both found in indirect speech, can be illuminating. In *Thebaid* 3, Tydeus, returning to Argos after his failed embassy to Thebes, is indignantly telling the story in every city along the way to gather support for the coming war (336–44).¹⁰ Eteocles, just like Paris in the *Achilleid*, is criticized for, among other things, his untrustworthiness,¹¹ this being the last in the series of accusations and thus probably the gravest charge: Tydeus says that "he suffered force, night, crime, arms, treachery, that such are the treaties of the Echionian king, that a brother is denied his rights" (*sese ... / ... vim, noctem, scelus, arma, dolos; ea foedera passum / regis Echionii, fratri sua iura negari*, *Theb.* 3.339–42). Furthermore, a rather interesting comparandum for the context of the *Achilleid* comes from Silius' *Punica*, where the siege of Saguntum starts with Hannibal's threatening speech to the defenders, as relayed to us indirectly by the narrator. By means of a polysyndeton, Hannibal claims to "have in his hands" law, *fides*, and the gods, and thus to have control of everything that may be of help to the Saguntines: *longe clausis sua foedera, longe / Ausoniam fore ... ; / scita patrum et leges et iura fidemque deosque / in dextra nunc esse sua* ("besieged as they are, their allies and Italy will be too far away ... the senate's decrees and laws and rules and good faith and the gods are in his right hand now," *Sil.* 1.301–4).¹² The context is different from both Statian passages, but the items in the series closely match those in the *Achilleid*. In both the *Achilleid* and the *Punica*, *fides* is mentioned as the second of three items (although Silius elaborates on the first through synonyms) in climactic order: *fides* is "above the laws" as a more general value, but the gods are still higher in this suggested hierarchy. It is striking to see how closely Hannibal's boastful words resemble Agamemnon's language of indignation. Paris and Hannibal are both presented (by Agamemnon and Hannibal himself, respectively) as disrespecting

fides among other values, and as attacking at the same time the gods and the Olympian *cosmos* in a kind of Gigantomachy – Paris by “trampling upon the gods,” Hannibal by claiming to possess the gods’ power and authority “in his right hand.” The parallel series of laws, faith, and gods in both texts might suggest that these values are by nature interconnected and not just incidentally mentioned together: by attacking laws, one inevitably attacks faith, and by attacking faith, one inevitably attacks the gods.¹³ However, the fact that in both texts this triplet of values is employed in character speech suggests that “laws, faith, and the gods” are not just values (respected by some and disrespected by others) but also effective rhetorical tools, clichés that can be used in the world of politics either to gain support (as Agamemnon does) or to threaten (in Hannibal’s case).¹⁴ Hannibal might be the arch-villain in a Roman epic for having no respect for *fides*, and Paris may be accused of the same for the rape of Helen in the *Achilleid*, but Agamemnon is also abusing the concept of *fides* for his own political ends. The *Achilleid*, at least in this passage, seems to suggest how easily *fides* as a “pure” ethical concept is “contaminated” by rhetoric in political usage.

The strategy of making a connection between the Trojan and the Punic wars is well established in both the *Aeneid* and the *Punica*, but it seems rather unexpected in the *Achilleid*; yet such a connection is suggested again in the next sentence of the Statian passage. In line 404, Agamemnon extends his personal criticism of Paris to the whole Trojan race, resenting the fact that they pervert the meaning of words: a “Phrygian treaty” (*foedus Phrygium*) is apparently not based on mutual *bona fides*, and in the Trojan vocabulary commerce (*commercium*) supposedly does not involve an exchange, only the taking of goods. The Trojans are thus characterized as a traditionally perfidious and untrustworthy people. This charge also returns in a later passage when Ulysses, just about to expose Achilles, urges the hero to join the army with the exhortation *sine perfida palleat Ide* (“let treacherous Ide turn pale with fear,” 1.872). The personal perfidy of Paris, committed against Menelaus when his guest, is transferred here to the mountain where the fateful beauty contest took place. The character of Paris originates in the Trojan land: treachery is literally part of Trojan nature.¹⁵

In both Agamemnon’s and Ulysses’ speech, then, we witness how reference to a particular crime is turned into an ethnic stereotype. They are speaking, of course, specifically of the Trojan disrespect for *fides*; but for Roman and modern readers, Agamemnon’s phrase *foedus Phrygium* seems to be nothing other than a version of a rather famous ethnic stereotype, the Roman slogan of *fides Punica*.¹⁶ This accusation is projected back to the eve of the Trojan war and turned against the ancestors of the Romans themselves. The irony (from a Roman point of view) of such charges against the Trojans,

however, is much more poignant in the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas is accused of perfidy in Carthage: Dido, who thought of their liaison as a marriage based on *foedus*, discovers in the hero “the perjury characteristic of Laomedon’s people” (*Laomedontaeae ... periuria gentis*, *A.* 4.542).¹⁷ The main difference between Agamemnon’s and Dido’s argument is that, while the queen mentions a precedent, the story of the most notoriously treacherous Trojan, Agamemnon apparently feels that no further examples other than Paris’ act are needed to persuade his audience of the validity of the stereotype.

Whether for Greeks, Romans, or other nations, stereotypes are basic tools in the construction of identity: censuring others for not respecting certain values is almost always also an implicit claim that “we” do respect those values. It is important in this respect, I think, that the narrator of the *Achilleid* in a later passage connects the Trojan expedition with a drastic change in Greek society – in fact, the emergence of Greece as a political entity:

tunc primum Graecia vires
contemplata suas; tunc sparsa ac dissona moles
in corpus vultumque coit et rege sub uno
disposita est.

(Stat. *Ach.* 1.456–9)

Then first did Greece survey her might, then the scattered, dissonant mass gathers
into body and countenance, disposed under a single monarch.

Agamemnon, who at the beginning of the Aulis episode was one of the kings (*regum*, 398), now becomes the only king (*rege ... uno*, 458) as “political chaos” is replaced by a “body politic.”¹⁸ That was, it turns out, the aim of his *ambitio* (cf. 399). The narrator continues with a simile (459–66) in which the Greeks are compared to wild animals gradually enclosed by the hunter’s nets, frightened by fire and noise, forced to gather on the same hill, and made tame by common fear (*socioque timore mansuescunt*, 464–5). This simile can be interpreted together with the earlier summary of Agamemnon’s speeches: his rhetoric is nothing other than the “net” he uses in this “political hunt.” Agamemnon gathers support for himself by campaigning with the slogans of “laws, faith, and the gods” and suggests that these are the values upon which Greek culture and society rests; but the monarchy he builds is actually based on fear rather than trust. As I have noted above, *fides* in this passage of the *Achilleid* seems to be a catchy political phrase rather than a genuine value. If there is *fides* here, it means one-sided loyalty rather than mutual trust. Thucydides in his famous interpretation of the Trojan war stated that Agamemnon was able to gather a military force not by invoking the oath made to Tyndareus, but by having more power than others; if Statius adds a comment,¹⁹ it is that Agamemnon’s political power

is based as much on rhetorical as on military and economic might. *Fides*, it turns out, is used and abused in the political world of the *Achilleid* to no less a degree than in the story of Achilles' cross-dressing on Scyros, which presents an "Ovidian" world of changing identities and unreliable appearances.²⁰

Degrees of (Mis)Trust in Greece

It is during such political developments that Ulysses and Diomedes set off for Scyros to find Achilles. During the early phase of their mission, *fides* is employed in two key passages. After playing an important role in Agamemnon's anti-Trojan rhetoric, now the term is applied to the relationship between some of the players in the Greek political world.

Upon arrival, Ulysses "heads for the hill [where the palace is located] with trusty Diomedes" (*ipse ardua fido cum Diomede petit*, 1.700–1). The pair are compared to "two wolves who, forming an alliance, go forward on a winter's night" (*procedunt gemini ceu foedere iuncto / hiberna sub nocte lupi*, 704–5). *Fidus* and *foedus* are thus used in conjunction here, just as *fides* and *foedus* had been in the Aulis episode. The simile itself is an allusion to Homer: in the *Doloneia* these same two heroes were compared to a pair of lions on their night mission (*Il.*10.297).²¹ *Fidus* *Diomedes*, on the other hand, recalls that most trusty of Aeneas' men, *fidus* *Achates*.²² While the simile and its Homeric model emphasize the equal rank of the two heroes, the Virgilian intertext seems to suggest rather that the relationship of Ulysses and Diomedes is asymmetric: Diomedes, although socially not inferior to Ulysses, is reduced to the role of the companion.

He also seems not to be so trustworthy as the adjective suggests. While they are walking, Diomedes asks what the plan is, how they will uncover Achilles, and why Ulysses has brought unwarlike items like wands, cymbals, and headbands for the journey (712–17). "The Ithacan replies to him with a smile and with slightly relaxed face" (*illi subridens Ithacus paulum ore remisso*, 718). When Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1 had replied to Venus *olli subridens* (1.254), he started with the statement that he would uncover for her the secrets of fate – even if his prophecy itself was actually rather one-sided and overly optimistic.²³ In the *Achilleid*, Ulysses, as the Virgilian intertext suggests, plays the role of the omniscient planner calming down an associate who is needlessly worrying because of his lack of knowledge. Unlike Jupiter, however, he remains secretive even in rhetoric, telling Diomedes that he should not fret but only remember his duty:

... tu cuncta citus de puppe memento
ferre, ubi tempus erit, clipeumque his iungere donis,
qui pulcher signis auroque asperrimus astat;

nec sat erit: tecum lituo bonus adsit Agyrtes
occultamque tubam tacitos adportet in usus.

(Stat. *Ach.* 1.721–5)

You must be sure to bring them all quickly from the boat when the time comes and to add a shield to these gifts, which stands beautified with reliefs and rough with much gold; nor shall this suffice. Let Agyrtes, the expert trumpeter, be with you and carry a hidden trumpet for a secret purpose.

The “trusted companion” needs to know nothing more than his personal part in the plan, as *occultam* and *tacitos* emphasize in line 725: the aim of bringing a trumpet remains a secret not just for the Scyrians, but for Diomedes as well. Ulysses’ reticence, of course, may make the narrative more interesting for readers (or at least those who do not know the traditional story) by keeping the suspense regarding how Achilles will actually be exposed; but it is easy to feel how much Ulysses enjoys the situation that he is “in the know,” while those around him are not.²⁴

He continues to act in this manner after arriving at the palace. In the next scene, they meet the king, and Ulysses begins by reflecting on the flow of information between Aulis and Scyros. “Great rumour of the savage war has already reached your ears, I think” (*magna, reor, tuas pervenit ad aures fama trucidis belli*, 728–30), he begins his speech, and then he introduces himself and Diomedes: “if the names of the captains whom the avenging son of Atreus trusts have been carried hither” (*si nomina forte / huc perlata ducum, fident quibus ultor Atrides*, 730–1). The island of Scyros is implicitly characterized by Ulysses here as the periphery of the Greek world, where one cannot be sure that people have heard the important news and know members of the political elite. In contrast to this periphery, Ulysses represents not just a centre in the broader sense, but also a narrowly defined “inner circle” around Agamemnon, in whom the king – so Ulysses claims at least – has trust.

Ulysses then generously admits Lycomedes to this privileged company of *fides*, disclosing their secret mission: they are on their way to Troy to do reconnaissance (735–7). “For why should I be afraid to tell you everything, Greek as you are and renowned for your trustworthiness?” (*metuam quid enim tibi cuncta fateri, / cum Graius notaque fide celeberrimus?* 734–5). Ulysses’ words here are in some sense the pendant of Agamemnon’s stereotype, *foedus Phrygium*. The king explained Paris’ breaking of *fides* by calling attention to his ethnic background; now Ulysses praises Lycomedes’ *fides* in conjunction with emphasis on his Greek identity. But precisely when it is about to be formulated *expressis verbis*, the idea of a *fides Graeca* is called into question. For, as the reader well knows, none of Ulysses’ words

are earnest.²⁵ The mission is not to reconnoitre Troy, but to find Achilles, and Lycomedes is not to be trusted with the truth precisely because his *fides* is in question: instead of being trusted, he is suspected of hiding Achilles.

What Ulysses does not know is that Lycomedes is unaware that he is hiding Achilles: he himself has been deceived. In fact, this “gentlest of kings” (*regum placidissime*, 729) is the only one among the main Greek characters of the *Achilleid* who is not actively involved in some kind of deception. Even if he does not mean it, Ulysses speaks the truth: Lycomedes is indeed the man of *fides* in Statius’ epic. Who may be compared to him in this respect is Chiron: just like Lycomedes, the centaur lives at the margins of Greek civilization in his cave on Mount Pelion, loyal to Achilles and his family, and he is the victim of Thetis’ deception himself. The case of Lycomedes and Chiron shows how problematic the value of *fides* turns out to be in the *Achilleid*. There are the deceivers, like Agamemnon and Ulysses, and those who are deceived: the rest of the Greeks, influenced by Agamemnon’s rhetoric, and these two old men who are not suspicious enough to uncover deceptions. Is there, we may ask, a mutual and stable trust relationship in this world?

Fida Parens: Achilles and His Families

Fides is also an issue in the *Achilleid* at the more private level of family relations, and it is an issue nothing less problematic than in the political sphere.²⁶ The family of Achilles is severely broken: the child is educated not at home, close to his parents (as in Homer’s *Il.* 9.485–95, 18.57–60), but in Chiron’s cave, and his father Peleus does not even appear in the poem as an active character.²⁷ Achilles is then entrusted to the care of another foster father, Lycomedes, at Scyros. Who does young Achilles have trust in – and how much can he be trusted?

The young hero first appears in the *Achilleid* after Thetis arrives at Chiron’s cave to bring her son to Scyros. He is just returning from a hunt, where he has killed a lioness and brings the cubs home as pets:

... fetam Pholoes sub rupe leaenam
perculerat ferro vacuisque reliquerat antris
ipsam, sed catulos adportat et incitat ungues.
Quos tamen, ut fido genetrix in limine visa est,
abicit exceptamque avidis circumligat ulnis,
iam gravis amplexu iamque aequus vertice matri. (Stat. *Ach.* 1.168–73)

He had struck with steel a lioness newly whelped under Pholoe’s crag and left her in her empty cavern, bringing home the cubs and provoking their claws. But when his

mother appears on the trusty threshold, he throws them aside, welcomes and encircles her with greedy elbows, already powerful in his embrace and of height to match her.

This scene shows well the liminality of the poem's protagonist: in some scenes, he appears to be a young adult, while, in others, he is just a small child. The returning Achilles glimpses his mother at the threshold of the cave: clearly a symbolic line between inside and outside, safety and danger, family and outsiders, childhood and adulthood.²⁸ Achilles' reaction at first reading might suggest that everything is all right between mother and son. But it would be hard to miss the fact that in line 171 the adjective *fidus* agrees with *limine* rather than *genetrix*: Achilles, the narrator tells us, trusts the threshold, standing metonymically for the cave, his home where he has lived for years, rather than his mother, who gave him birth. As Renée Uccellini notes in her recent commentary, Statius frequently uses the adjective *fidus* for relatives: there is a *frater fidus* in the *Silvae* (3.3.115), and in the *Thebaid* the term is applied to *coniunx* (2.332), *parentes* (3.93), *sorores* (4.88), and *genetrix* (9.652). As she also notes, we can also find parallels in Roman literature for putting trust in a place: *fida domus*, for example, is what Ovid must leave behind in *Tristia* 1.3.²⁹ But in the passage under discussion, trust is emphatically directed at the well-known place instead of the parent who has long been missing from the child's life. There is joy at seeing her again, but no trust in the narrow sense.

The narrator stresses this point again at the end of the scene. After a banquet and entertainment with song, Achilles goes to sleep:

nox trahit in somnos; saxo collabitur ingens
Centaurus blandusque umeris se innectit Achilles,
quamquam ibi fida parens, adsuetaque pectora mavult. (Stat. *Ach.* 1.195–7)

Night draws to slumber. The huge Centaur collapses on the stone floor and Achilles fondly twines himself about his shoulders; though his faithful mother is there, he prefers the familiar bosom.

Thetis is assigned, in the end, the adjective *fida*, which she should have had some twenty lines earlier at the threshold of the cave; but the epithet is found in a concessive clause, and the syntax partially cancels out the adjective's meaning. It is hard for Thetis to find her place in the everyday routine of Achilles. She might be *fida parens* in the sense that she is faithful to and supportive of Achilles (in her own way she does want to ensure his safety – this is, indeed, why she came in the first place), but she is not really a “trusty

parent,” since Achilles as a child goes to Chiron for safety and trusts his foster father more than he does Thetis.

This line might also be read as an ironic echo of the narrator’s words some fifty lines earlier. While Achilles is still out hunting, Thetis tells Chiron a false story that she is going to take Achilles to the far end of the Ocean to repeat the magical rites that will ensure his safety (1.126–41). The old and loyal centaur – just like Lycomedes (see above) – seems to be tricked easily: *duc, optima, quaeso, duc, genetrix, humilique deos infringe precatu* (“take him, best of mothers, take him I pray and bend the gods with humble entreaty”, 1.143–4). Chiron’s flattering address, *optima genetrix*, may be contrasted with how the narrator characterizes Thetis when he marks the end of her speech two lines earlier: *sic ficta parens* (141). How are we to understand *ficta*?³⁰ This participle of *fin*go can be used with an active or passive meaning (OLD s.v. *fictus* a and c). Thetis, undoubtedly, is insincere and deceiving in this passage – so, in an active sense, the phrase would mean “so fabricates the mother.” At the same time, *fictus* also betokens something made up, false: “so [spoke] the made-up mother.” Thus, for a moment at least, Thetis’ very status as mother is also called into question, not in a biological sense, but rather in that her absence from Achilles’ life abnegates to some extent the existence of a mother-and-son relationship. When Achilles goes to sleep, the expression *fida parens* recalls the highly similar *ficta parens*: Achilles does not trust his mother as much as would be expected, because she has not been a “true mother” and a *genetrix optima*, as Chiron addresses her.

How much this relationship is broken, even to the extent that Thetis’ status as mother may be questioned, is also well suggested in the scene when mother and son arrive at Scyros at dawn. Achilles has slept throughout the journey and is completely surprised to wake in an unknown place:

stupet aere primo:
 quae loca, qui fluctus, ubi Pelion? omnia versa
 atque ignota videt dubitatque agnoscere matrem. (Stat. *Ach.* 1.248–50)

At the first sight of sky he was stunned: what place is this, what waves, where is Pelion? Everything he sees is changed and strange, and he doubts that he recognizes his mother.

The final words of the quotation are a Virgilian echo: *incipi parve puer risu cognoscere matrem* (“Begin to recognize your mother, small child, by smiling,” *Ecl.* 4.60).³¹ But while Virgil’s exhortation to the newborn child to recognize his mother was an optimistic hope for a close bond between parent and son, in Statius’ *Achilleid* the child on the threshold of adulthood barely

recognizes his mother, even as she is, in fact, the only familiar sight for him at the moment.

Achilles' arrival at Scyros is a turning point in the plot, and also in the development of the hero's family relations. If, until now, he was a child who could not really trust his mother, now he is going to be the one who should not be trusted, a boy disguised as a girl. He is going to be much more made-up, *ficta*, as a girl, than Thetis had been as a mother. The issue of *fides*, accordingly, surfaces in a number of passages in the Scyros episode.

Thetis advises Achilles that he must play the role of the girl convincingly in order to be admitted among the girls of Lycomedes: *comitesque modis imitabere fictis, / ne te suspectum molli non misceat aulae / rector* ("you should copy your companions with feigned manners, lest the ruler suspect you and not let you join the soft quarters," 1.340–2). In other words, the fiction must produce *fides* in the Scyrians as spectators of the performance. Lycomedes himself has no suspicions at all ("for who could resist divine deceits?" – the narrator comments in line 364), but his daughters are more cautious. Although *fides* or its cognates are not used here, the following passage is highly relevant for notions of trust:

... nec turba piarum
Scyriadum cessat nimio defigere visu
virginis ora novae, quantum cervice comisque
emineat quantumque umeros ac pectora fundat.
Dehinc sociare choros castisque accedere sacris
hortantur ceduntque loco et contingere gaudent.
Qualiter Idaliae volucres, ubi mollia frangunt
nubila, iam longum caeloque domoque gregatae,
si iunxit pinnas diversoque hospita tractu
venit avis, cunctae primum mirantur et horrent;
mox propius propiusque volant, atque aere in ipso
paulatim fecere suam plausuque secundo
circumeunt hilares et ad alta cubilia ducunt.

(Stat. *Ach.* 1.366–78)

The flock of dutiful Scyrian girls continue to stare relentlessly at the new maiden's face, marvelling how she tops them by neck and hair, how much broader spread her chest and shoulders. Then they urge her to share their dances and join their chaste rituals, yielding her place and rejoicing in the contact. As with Idalian birds when they break soft clouds, long congregated in their home and in the sky: if a stranger bird coming from a distant region joins her wings, at first they all wonder and fear, but then they fly closer and closer and, still in the air, little by little they make her one of their own, merrily circling her with auspicious flap of wing, leading her to their lofty roost.

The girls first stare at the newcomer and, as the simile shows, this stare is simultaneously that of wonder and fear. Furthermore, although they immediately see how different the newcomer's figure is from theirs, their caution – as again the simile suggests – is not the result of that, or of Achilles failing to play his part convincingly, but a consequence of Achilles' very status as newcomer: suspicion is directed at the stranger as such. Trust is gradual but quickly developed, to be sure, as caution gives way to curiosity³² – but still, it has to be developed; it is not a given.

The first among the girls who is going to lose the trust developed in this scene is Deidamia, with whom Achilles falls in love and whom he eventually rapes. The girl is shocked to find out that her companion is actually a man, "although she has for some time suspected his *fides*" (*quamquam olim suspecta fides*, 663; *fides* means here both "good faith" and "true identity"). The breaking of this trust is also for Deidamia the test of another *fides*, that felt for her father, Lycomedes. To preserve it, she should tell him what happened, and indeed she entertains the idea (*quid faciat? casusne suos ferat ipsa parenti?*, "What was she to do? Should she take her misfortunes to her father?," 665), but in the end, "feeling the love she has deceived for so long, she remains silent about her misery and suppresses the crime that both now shared" (*in corde manebat / ille diu deceptus amor: silet aegra premitque / iam commune nefas*, 667–9). The lost trust is thus quickly rebuilt in a completely different version: as a soon-to-be family, Achilles and Deidamia now share the secret of Achilles' true identity, their love, and also Deidamia's pregnancy – a secret Deidamia's nurse is also let in on (669–74).

This secret is then endangered not from inside the family (Deidamia's sisters and father, who seem to suspect nothing) but from the outside, by Ulysses, whose arrival stirs up the girls. "The rumour has already filled with noise the hidden palace, where the maidens have their trusted dwelling" (*rumor in arcana iamdudum perstrepat aula, / virginibus qua fida domus*, 750–1). Just as in the case of Chiron's cave, where *fidus* was employed as the adjective for the threshold of the cave (instead of for Achilles' mother), here a home is called trusted. Now the women's quarters are "trusty," and the usage is ironic again. The very safety of this place for its inhabitants implies that it is off-limits for those on the outside and thus secretive (*arcana*). The reader knows, however, how easy it was for Achilles to infiltrate this "trusted place," and also that there is a secret kept even from most of its inhabitants.

For Achilles to finally be discovered, the girls must come forward and leave their *fida domus*. Lycomedes – probably trying to show them as suitable wives for the illustrious guests³³ – summons them for a banquet (755–818) and on the next day has them entertain Ulysses and his company with a dance (819–40). The discovery itself takes place when they are presented

with the gifts that Diomedes had earlier asked Ulysses about, with the shield and spear included (841–85). When Achilles glimpses the weapons, his male instincts take control over him, and he cannot play his role as a girl anymore. The physiological and psychological effects on the hero are explained by the narrator through a simile that recalls the earlier scene of Achilles with the lion cubs:³⁴

infremuit torsitque genas, et fronte relictas
surrexere comae; nusquam mandata parentis,
nusquam occultus amor, totoque in pectore Troia est.
Ut leo, materno cum raptus ab ubere mores
accepit pectique iubas hominemque vereri
edidicit nullasque rapi nisi iussus in iras,
si semel adverso radiavit lumine ferrum,
eiurata fides domitorque inimicus, in illum
prima fames, timidoque pudet servisse magistro. (Stat. *Ach.* 1.855–63)

He cried out and rolled his eyes: the hair stood up from his forehead. Forgotten is his mother's charge, forgotten his hidden love: Troy is in all his heart. As a lion snatched from his mother's dugs learns manners, taught to let his mane be combed, to respect man, and never to fly into a rage unless ordered; but if once steel flashes out in front of him, he forswears his faith and his tamer becomes his foe, his first hunger is for him and he is ashamed to have obeyed a timid master.

Achilles, just like the tamed lion, “breaks *fides*” (862) upon seeing the flash of weapons.³⁵ The master in the simile can be compared to both Thetis and Deidamia: it was the former who “tamed” Achilles in the first place, and the latter who further taught him how to play his role, even after becoming secret lovers. But the *fides* that has been shown for them is not the same. Achilles, as we have seen, did not feel trust for her mother in the first place, and his following of Thetis' instructions on Scyros was not based on trust either, but rather on obedience, as Achilles himself will claim in his address to Thetis later: *paruimus, genetrix ... / paruimus nimium* (“I have obeyed you, mother ... obeyed too much,” 2.17–18). Deidamia, by contrast, has become Achilles' secret lover. Achilles did not only obey her and follow her instructions: their relation was also based on sharing a secret, on mutual trust. The girl, when Achilles finally lets himself be discovered and decides to leave Scyros, may feel herself betrayed not only (and not primarily) as a master or teacher, but as a lover as well.

The narrator himself seems to suggest this in the final scene of *Achilleid* 1.³⁶ On their last night together, Deidamia worries that Achilles will not

return to her, choosing the company of female captives or even the beautiful Helen (931–55). Achilles “tries to comfort her, swears fidelity and guarantees what he swears with tears” (*solatur iuratque fidem iurataque fletu / spondet*, 957–8), promising to bring her captive women and gifts from Troy (958–9). The similarity of *iuratque fidem* with *eiurata fides* in the simile is noteworthy: the narrator’s choice of words suggests that, from the point of view of Deidamia, it was a lovers’ *fides* that had been broken and that it is being rebuilt here. But how long will it hold? We have no reason to suppose that Achilles is not sincere when he swears,³⁷ but we know that he will never return to Scyros: his choice was not only that of a heroic life but also that of an early heroic death, and there will be a Briseis at Troy (whose role by Statius’ time has been transformed into that of a lover rather than just a captive), not to speak of Polyxena.³⁸ The narrator accordingly reminds us in the final line of the book that “Achilles’ vain words were swept away by the winds” (*irrita ventosae rapiebant verba procellae*, 960).³⁹ Thus for all the hero’s probable sincerity in the moment, this scene is, in the end, as much about the breaking of *fides* in the future as about establishing it in the present.

Epilogue: Achilles and the Greeks in Statius and Homer

From a number of passages in *Achilleid* 1, it seems, we can (re)construct two narratives of *fides*, more or less separate from each other. The narrative of *fides* in internal and international politics is built around, as we have seen, a tension between rhetoric and practice: *fides* is an important slogan in the anti-Trojan political rhetoric of Agamemnon and is also emphasized by Ulysses in his dialogue with Lycomedes, but at the same time, the new Greece built by Agamemnon is based on fear rather than trust, and characters such as Diomedes and Lycomedes are trusted less than they could be. The other narrative, that of *fides* in Achilles’ life, starts with a similar tension between the ideal of the *fida parens* and the reality of a mother for whom the son cannot feel much trust. Then on Scyros, another pattern can be discerned: there is a certain rhythm in breaking and establishing *fides*. The daughters of Lycomedes quickly accept and begin to trust their new companion, but then it turns out for Deidamia that this trust has been unfounded. Still, her shocking discovery leads not to the exposure of Achilles, but to a new kind of *fides*, the mutual trust between lovers. But even this trust is then forgotten by Achilles when he glimpses the shield: and although it is then reaffirmed by him, as we have just seen, the narrator at the end of *Achilleid* 1 foreshadows that it will be broken again in the future.

The *Achilleid* breaks off just when these two narratives of public and private *fides* could merge, as Achilles joins the Greek army. It seems, however,

that the narrator prefers to keep them separate. It might have been obvious to tell the story of Achilles' unmasking as a choice between private and public *fides*, with the hero choosing loyalty for the common heroic cause over loyalty to his mother and lover, but in the *Achilleid*, as the lion simile in the discovery scene tells us, Achilles follows his instincts instead of choosing between different types of *fides*.

The issue of *fides* thus can be integrated into the culture versus nature paradigm that has influenced recent readings of the *Achilleid*.⁴⁰ But at the same time, this view of Achilles' choice can perhaps also be interpreted as a proleptic allusion to Achilles' wrath⁴¹ in the *Iliad*. By presenting a version of the Greek preparations for the Trojan war in which *fides* is only a slogan for Agamemnon and in which Achilles joins the army following his instincts rather than *fides*, Statius seems to suggest how deeply the crisis that is to break out in the final year of the war is rooted within the Greek army. The Homeric Achilles, however, recalls differently his motives for fighting against Troy. In his quarrel with Agamemnon, he states that he, just like the other Greeks, came to Troy not for personal reasons but to help Agamemnon and Menelaus (*Il.* 1.152–62) – that is, out of some kind of loyalty. The tension between the words of the Homeric Achilles and the deeds of his Statian counterpart points to a difference between obeying one's superiors and self-consciously making a decision based on loyalty. Achilles has been loyal in the sense that he has not questioned Agamemnon's authority until now; but, as Statius suggests – correcting the Homeric Achilles' words, as it were – he did not originally choose to join the expedition out of loyalty. Given that, it is no surprise that his loyalty during the war turns out to be temporary and that it must be Achilles, rather than any other hero, who challenges Agamemnon's authority.

The quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, moreover, seems in some ways to reverse and in some ways to repeat what happened at the hero's discovery on Scyros. On the island, he could not bear to play the female (and thus subordinate, limited) role assigned to him anymore; Ulysses' engineering caused him to "break his faith" to Thetis and Deidamia and to follow his warrior's instincts instead by joining the army. At Troy, it is Agamemnon's harsh words that make the hero break his loyalty again, this time to the king as his superior, and thus effectively withdraw from the fighting. Even the two similes in the *Achilleid*, that of the hunter and that of the temporarily tamed lion (discussed above), seem to be quite fitting to describe Achilles' reaction in the quarrel scene, too: Agamemnon might have tamed the hero to be loyal like the other Greeks, but he is the one "animal" in the "herd" who eventually decides to fight back. Indeed, he would attack the king physically, just like the lion does in Statius' simile, were Athena not there to restrain him (*Il.* 1.188–202).

For his withdrawal from the fight, Achilles has to pay a steep price in the private sphere and his personal relationships. Briseis might be just a valuable gift in the *Iliad*, but she becomes a lover in later tradition and (in Ovid's *Heroides* 3) complains about how Achilles let her be taken from him and has done little to regain her: pride is more important to him than the lover's faith.⁴² As we have seen, Achilles repeatedly restored *fides* with Deidamia on Scyros. At Troy, another relationship has to be rebuilt, this time in the political sphere. After the death of his friend Patroclus, caused indirectly by his withdrawal, Achilles seeks to take revenge; but he also realizes that, in order to do so, he must restore his relationship with the community.

If we read the *Iliad* in isolation, we might see the reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon in Book 19 as a return to the state of affairs at the beginning of the poem, just before the quarrel broke out. If, however, we read Homer with Statius in mind, we might form a different impression. Some readers may feel that in *Iliad* 19 the relationship between Achilles, Agamemnon, and the Greek community is established more firmly than ever before. Both Achilles and Agamemnon now admit to having committed some faults of their own, and they conclude their agreement as more or less equal partners. In the *Achilleid*, Agamemnon abused *fides* for his political ends, and Achilles joined the army instinctively rather than out of loyalty or trust; but they both have matured and learnt something about how to cooperate as members of the community. For other readers, however, it may seem that what we have read in the *Achilleid* also casts some shadows over the reconciliation in *Iliad* 19, suggesting it can be only a temporary agreement between the man of politics and the man of instincts rather than the result of any character development. In my view, the texts allow both the "optimistic" and the "pessimistic" reading; it is left to the reader to construct the "intertextual biography of Achilles."

NOTES

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- 1 I quote the Latin text of Dilke 1954; translations are taken from Shackleton Bailey 2003, with some modifications.
- 2 Also used by Statius in the *Silvae* (3.3.21, 4.4.81, 5.1.33, cf. Dilke 1954: *ad Ach.* 1.880), along with its variant, *miranda fides* (1.3.20). Myers 2000 does not discuss the latter expression itself, but by choosing it as the title of her article implicitly suggests that it is characteristic of Statius' paradoxographic strategy

in his descriptions of aristocratic villas. On expressions of disbelief in ancient literature in general, see also Stinton 1976 (who focuses on Greek, but also discusses some examples from Roman poetry at 64–6); on metaliterary faith in Flavian epic, see Lovatt (discussing expressions like *nec vana fides* in Valerius) and Keith in this volume.

- 3 *Fides* occurs once again in the *Achilleid* to refer to the reliability of narrative, when Ulysses and Diomedes pray that Calchas' prophecy about the whereabouts of Achilles has been true (*responsique fidem et verum Calchanta precantur*, "they pray the oracle be trusty and Calchas true," 1.681). It should also be noted that, in a *recusatio*, Statius introduces the *Achilleid* itself as the product of a lack of confidence in his poetic abilities: otherwise, he claims, he would be writing an epic about Domitian (*te longo necdum fidente / paratu molimur magnusque tibi praeludit Achilles*, "on you I work in long and not yet confident preparing, and great Achilles is your prelude," 1.18–19).
- 4 Cf. Rosati 1992: 245 on the poem as a "comedy of errors."
- 5 The episode has traditionally received less scholarly attention than other parts of the *Achilleid*, but see Moul 2012, focusing on issues of gender and the Virgilian intertextual background of the episode, and Parkes 2008 on intertextuality with Statius' own *Thebaid*.
- 6 Cf. Moul 2012: 288 on the oxymoron. It might be added that the line features another slight oxymoron with *supplice regum conquestu* ("suppliant complaint of kings"): kings are not supposed to supplicate but receive suppliants themselves.
- 7 See also Augoustakis 2016a: 211 on this passage, focusing on how Agamemnon presents the irreconcilable geographic, cultural, and moral differences between Europe and Asia; however, as Augoustakis discusses, the strategy of the narrator in the *Achilleid* is rather to blur many of these differences and thus deconstruct the East/West binary opposition.
- 8 The verb *calcare* is indeed used in a description of Gigantomachy at *Thebaid* 6.719 (*sic et Aloidae, cum iam calcaret Olympum / desuper Ossa rigens*, "so the sons of Aloeus, when frosty Ossa was already trampling upon the Olympus"), although the passage is of doubted authenticity. The imagery of Gigantomachy is also suggested earlier in the *Achilleid*, when Chiron speaks about his "uncontainable" pupil, mentioning two of the mountains traditionally connected with Gigantomachy (*nunc illum non Ossa capit, non Pelion ingens, / Pharsaliaeve nives*, 1.151–2); cf. Barchiesi 1996: 48.
- 9 As an anonymous reader suggests to me, *calcata* might also be read as a pun foreshadowing Calchas' prophecy about the whereabouts of Achilles (1.491–537). We would expect Calchas' role as a seer to imply being in harmony with the gods, but Protesilaus' exhortation (*irrumpe deos et fata latentia vexa*, "break in upon the gods and harry the skulking fates," 1.508) hints at a concept of divination as a violent way of obtaining knowledge reserved for the gods, and in this sense comparable to *calcare*.

- 10 The passage has been identified as an intertext for the *Achilleid* by Parkes 2008: 389–90. See also Vessey 1973: 148 for a short discussion of the *Thebaid* passage. Noting the rhetorical importance of asyndeton, Vessey cites Curtius 1953: 285–6, who describes the technique as a “manneristic deformation of the line ... [which] becomes more frequent in Statius.” On the rhetoric of *fides* in Tydeus’ mission, see also Augoustakis and Keith in this volume.
- 11 Tydeus’ audience, by contrast, is characterized by trust, but not without irony: they believe everything they are told all too easily (*prona fides populis; deus omnia credere suadet / Armipotens, geminatque acceptos Fama pavores*, “the people are quick to believe; the god, the Lord of Arms, persuades them to credit everything, and rumour doubles admitted fears,” *Theb.* 3.343–4). In the previous book, Tydeus also had begun his speech to Eteocles with an emphasis on the king’s breaking of *fides* and *foedus*: *si tibi plana fides et dicti cura maneret / foederis ...* (“if clear good faith and care for uttered pledge abode with you,” 2.393–4). Eteocles, in turn, also questions Tydeus’ *bona fides* as a legate after hearing his threats (2.417).
- 12 It seems noteworthy that both the Trojans’ and Hannibal’s actions are expressed through metaphors involving body parts, the legs (cf. *calcata* in the *Achilleid*) and the hands (*dextra* in the *Punica*). Attack against values such as *fides* is no less violent than physical aggression. On both the *dextra* and the issue of *fides* in Hannibal’s speech, see Marks in this volume.
- 13 Marks (in this volume) also emphasizes the interdependency of *fides* and *pietas* in the *Punica*.
- 14 On *fides* as a political slogan in Flavian Rome, see Stocks in this volume.
- 15 Ulysses mentions Ida as the place of the beauty contest again at 2.50, where the mountain receives the adjective *Hectorea*. Although Hector is not particularly connected to Mount Ida, the adjective is used proleptically, since Achilles (the audience of Ulysses’ speech) will be Hector’s chief opponent in the war.
- 16 On the history of the term, see Prandi 1979 and Waldherr 2000. On Statius’ play with the etymology of *fides* and *foedus* at *Theb.* 2.331–52, see Keith in this volume.
- 17 On the questioning, suppression, and reversal of the charge of *fides* *Punica* in the *Aeneid*, see Starks 1999 and also the chapters by Fucecchi and Stocks in this volume. As an anonymous reader suggests, Statius’ complex Neapolitan/Greek/Roman identity may add to the irony of Trojans being accused of perfidy by Greeks in the *Achilleid*.
- 18 Cf. e.g., Ovid’s description of Chaos as a *moles* characterized by *discordia* (*Met.* 1.7–9), and Livy 2.32 (the story of Menenius Agrippa), Cic. *Off.* 1.85, Tac. *Hist.* 1.16 on the *corpus* of the state.
- 19 Statius’ *tunc primum Graecia vires contemplata suas* closely echoes, indeed, the Thucydidean statement that “Hellas ventured on no common enterprise

- before the Trojan war" (πρὸ γὰρ τῶν Τρωικῶν οὐδὲν φαίνεται πρότερον κοινῇ ἐργασαμένη ἡ Ἑλλάς, 1.3).
- 20 On the *Achilleid* as an "Ovidian and metamorphic" epic see most importantly Rosati 1992 and Hinds 1998: 135–44.
- 21 For further details of the intertextual background of the Statian simile, see Dilke 1954: *ad loc.*
- 22 Achates is the only of Aeneas' men to receive the epithet regularly (cf. esp. 1.188, where the situation – the heroes' arrival in an unknown region – most closely resembles that in the *Achilleid*; 6.158, 8.521, 8.586, 10.332, 12.384); Orotos and Aletes are each called *fidus* once (1.113, 9.307). As an anonymous reader pointed out to me, the relative frequency of the formulaic *fidus Achates* in the *Aeneid* is probably also a consequence of its convenience as a line ending.
- 23 O'Hara 1990: 132–63.
- 24 Secrecy is also the habit of Ulysses in the *Odyssey*: he is reluctant to disclose his true identity not just to the Phaeacians and to Athena (in disguise herself) upon reaching Ithaca, but also to members of his family, most notably his father, Laertes. Such caution, however, seems more warranted in the case of the swineherd Eumaeus, whose fidelity must be tested, and also in his own house, full of the suitors.
- 25 In fact, there seems to be a "Freudian slip" in Ulysses' words, a signal of his disingenuousness. The justification for disclosing military secrets, *cum Graius notaque fide celeberrimus*, neither stands in the dative agreeing with *tibi* from the previous line (if it did, *cum* would not be needed), nor is it a complete clause, since it lacks a verb. Ulysses cannot bring himself to actually utter the emphatic "are" of "you are trusted"!
- 26 On the public/private dichotomy of *fides*, see the chapters by Bernstein, Keith, and Stocks in this volume; on women's *fides*, pertinent for this section of my chapter, see the chapters by Augoustakis, Keith, and Ginsberg in this volume. On familial tensions in the *Achilleid*, see also Bessone 2016.
- 27 On the troubled relationship between Achilles and his mother, see Mendelsohn 1990; on Achilles and Chiron, Fantham 2003.
- 28 Rosati 1992: 237; Heslin 2005: 181.
- 29 Uccellini 2012: *ad Ach.* 1.197, 171. *Fida domus* will be used also at 1.751, which I will discuss later in this chapter.
- 30 In most manuscripts, *ficta* is changed into *fata*; but the next comment (that Chiron would not have given Achilles over, if Thetis had told him the truth, 141–3), makes *ficta* the better reading.
- 31 The intertext is recognized by Uccellini 2012: *ad loc.* and discussed in passing by Mendelsohn 1990: 302, who also interprets the allusion in connection with line 197.
- 32 Cf. Uccellini 2012: *ad* 370–1, 372–8, noting that this curiosity is also erotic in nature: it is not by chance that the birds in the simile live at Idalia, a region

associated with Venus. The girls are instinctively attracted to the boy, even while they believe they are seeing a girl. Achilles, it may be added, is also compared (indirectly) to a bird earlier in the *Achilleid* when Thetis, looking for a safe place to hide her son, is compared by the narrator to an anxious mother bird looking for a safe nest (1.212–16); trust has to be developed for the new and unknown place (*novisque vix stetit in ramis et protinus arbor amatur*, “scarce has she alighted on the stranger boughs and all at once she loves the tree,” 215–16), just like for the stranger bird in the simile discussed above. On this simile, see McNelis 2009: 244–6. Both of these similes might be connected to another, which the Homeric Achilles himself employs to describe his situation: he thinks of himself as having helped the Achaeans like a mother bird caring for its young (*Il.* 9.323–7). On the Homeric simile, see Dué 2005.

33 Heslin 2005: 147–52.

34 Cf. Mendelsohn 1990: 308.

35 See also Stocks in this volume on a tamed lion’s *fides/perfidia* in Martial 2.75.

36 On the farewell scene between Achilles and Deidamia, see also Newlands 2016: 145–7, 163–4.

37 He will, for example, glance back toward Scyros and think of Deidamia from aboard the ship taking him towards Aulis, with the fire of love kindled again in his heart (2.27–30).

38 On the erotic supplements and re-interpretations of the Homeric tradition regarding Achilles in Greek and Roman antiquity, see Fantuzzi 2012.

39 An allusion to Catullus 64.56 (*irrita ventosae linquens promissa procellae*); cf. Dilke 1954: *ad loc.*

40 See primarily Bernstein 2008: 105–31.

41 On how the hero’s famous wrath is foreshadowed in *Achilleid* 2, see, e.g., Hinds 2016: 314–18.

42 On Ovid’s version of the Briseis story, see Fantuzzi 2012: 128–45.

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PART III

Fides: Flavian History

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Fides, Pietas, and the Outbreak of Hostilities in Punica 1

RAYMOND MARKS

From the beginning of the *Punica*, Silius Italicus portrays the Carthaginians as a faithless people. In the proem he calls them *sacri ... perfida pacti / gens Cadmea* (1.5–6) and, a few lines later, explains why:

ter Marte sinistro
iuratumque Iovi foedus conventaque patrum
Sidonii fregere duces, atque impius ensis
ter placitam suasit temerando rumpere pacem. (Sil. 1.8–11)¹

Three times with wicked warfare the Sidonian leaders violated an alliance sworn by Jupiter and agreements of the fathers, and three times the impious sword induced them to dishonour and disrupt the peace they had agreed upon.

Drawing on a well-established Roman tradition, which viewed Carthage as faithless, Silius lays the groundwork for his moralizing treatment of the Second Punic War.² And, by all accounts, the epic satisfies this expectation: *fides* is a central ethical concept in the *Punica*, its integrity one of the epic's most consistent preoccupations, and the Carthaginian Hannibal its most conspicuous violator.³ But *fides* or, rather, its violation, *perfidia*, is not only at issue in these lines; *pietas* and its opposite, *impietas*, are as well. The adjective *impius* (1.10) colours the actions of Carthage's leaders as, additionally, a failure or disregard of *pietas*, and the number of injured parties thus increases to include, beyond the Romans, Jupiter (*Iovi*, 1.9) and the Carthaginian senate (*patrum*, 1.9). The offence committed against the latter, what may be deemed an instance of *impietas erga parentes* or *patriam*, is well accounted for by Arthur Pomeroy, and I refer the reader to his discussion thereof for further details.⁴

The offence committed against the former (*Iovi*) is, differently, an instance of *impietas erga deum*. This interpretation follows from the fact that the two treaty-making parties do not simply strike an agreement between themselves, but swear by a third, divine party – in this case Jupiter – which protects the sanctity of the pact; hence, when one breaks or violates the treaty, one injures the god or gods by whom it was sworn.⁵ But who is the offended god here? Most take *Iovi* to refer to the Roman Jupiter,⁶ but Spaltenstein finds the name ambiguous, possibly referring to his Carthaginian counterpart Hammon.⁷ The former is much more likely than the latter, however. Although Jupiter and Hammon are both called *Iuppiter* in the epic, in the great majority of those cases the Roman god is meant, not the Carthaginian.⁸ Also, while reading *Iovi* to refer to Hammon coheres with Polybius' statement that the Carthaginians, when striking treaties with Rome, swore by their "native gods" (τοὺς θεοὺς τοὺς πατρώους, 3.25.6),⁹ that passage could be invoked to support a Roman reading of the name; for, immediately thereafter, Polybius says that the Romans swore by Jupiter Lapis (Δία λίθον, 3.25.6).¹⁰ Moreover, elsewhere in the *Punica*, the Roman Jupiter is said to have been deceived by the Carthaginians (*deceptumque Iovem*, 6.693) when they broke their treaty with Rome by inciting the First Punic War (6.692–4), a statement that implies that the god had been sworn by in connection with that treaty; the same is never said or implied of Hammon.¹¹ Finally, if the Carthaginians swore by Hammon when they struck their treaty but behaved impiously toward him by breaking it, we might expect that god to show some hostility or anger toward them in the epic, as the Roman Jupiter does. But Hammon never does; to the contrary, the god supports the Carthaginians in their war with Rome, as when he fights on their side at Cannae (9.298). All of this is to say nothing of the fact that Silius' audience, being Roman, might well think principally of their own Jupiter, an association all the more pertinent to them in this case because of his role as a god of oaths, especially in the context of international relations.¹²

I linger on 1.8–11 because these lines alert us to a religious aspect of *fides*, namely, its close relation to *pietas* toward the gods, that is clearly fundamental to the poet's understanding of the concept – it is addressed in the proem, a moment of programmatic significance, after all – but is often overlooked or only briefly touched on in studies of it in the epic.¹³ Granted, *fides* in Rome is a moral concept applicable to a wide set of experiences, including some that do not have an overtly religious dimension. But, as we can see, Silius clearly wants us to understand from the outset that *fides* represents not only "the tie which binds those who have a reciprocal relationship with one another outside familial contexts," as Pomeroy puts it, but a tie that binds them to the gods, and that its violation, accordingly, represents an act

of impiety toward those gods, especially Jupiter.¹⁴ In my conclusion, I shall consider some of the implications such an understanding of *fides* and its relation to *pietas* have for our reading of the epic. In what follows, however, my principal objective is simply to establish this relation elsewhere in the text and, with that, to set it on firmer footing. To that end, I focus on another early, programmatic moment, the outbreak of hostilities at the Spanish city of Saguntum in *Punica 1* (296–555); there, as we shall see, Silius explores the interconnectedness of *fides* and *pietas* (and of their corresponding vices, *perfidia* and *impietas*) through two events that frame this opening instance of combat, Hannibal's declaration of war at its beginning and Jupiter's "response" at its end.

Hannibal's Declaration of War

When Hannibal arrives at Saguntum with his army (1.296–7), he rides around the city walls (1.298–9), ordering the people within to open the gates and abandon the rampart (1.300–1); their treaty with Rome, he says, will avail them nothing while they are inside, and, should they refuse to surrender, he will show them no mercy (1.301–2), as he has the authority to do whatever he wishes (1.303–4). He then throws a spear that strikes and kills a Saguntine named Caicus (1.304–9). Hannibal's perfidy and disregard of treaties are front and centre in this scene: he has violated Carthage's treaty with Rome (*abrupto foedere*, 1.296) and deems worthless Saguntum's own alliance with the city (*longe ... sua foedera, longe / Ausoniam fore*, 1.301–2).¹⁵ The issue of *fides* is also raised in his claim that "the decrees of the senate, laws, justice, faith, and the gods are now in his right hand" (*scita patrum et leges et iura fidemque deosque / in dextra nunc esse sua*, 1.303–4). It is not simply the word *fides* that catches the eye here, but the word *dextra*; for while it may connote, as it often does, authority or strength, it may also connote trust and loyalty, the right hand being, for the Romans, a symbol, conduit, and embodiment of *fides*.¹⁶ And so, as Hannibal indicates that he has the authority (*dextra* in one sense) to set terms with Saguntum and to enforce them, we also understand him to imply that his words carry the weight of a pledge or guarantee (*dextra* in still another sense) backed by the *fides* he says he possesses. Of course, his statement strikes us as hollow or even perverse, for he is laying claim to *fides* while in the very act of violating it.

Impiety toward the gods is also bound up with Hannibal's faithlessness here. Note that the authority he arrogates to himself in 1.303 is not simply political or legal, but divine (*deos*); this in itself smacks of hubris. But also note how the gods are coupled with *fides* there: *fidemque deosque*. Hannibal, it would appear, is acknowledging the role the gods play in sanctioning oaths

and agreements – and, as he does, he himself sets forth the terms of Saguntum's surrender – but at the same time rejects their sanctioning authority by replacing it with his own or, rather, with that which he possesses in his right hand, as he puts it. His *perfidia* is, therefore, closely linked to his *impietas*.¹⁷ As for the gods to whom he refers, we are, no doubt, meant to think of those by whom Carthage's treaty with Rome was sworn, whether Carthaginian or Roman. But their juxtaposition with *fides* also invites us to consider the sacral or religious aspects of *fides* itself and to view Hannibal's violation thereof as an act of impiety or sacrilege. In the *Punica*, in fact, *fides* is said several times to be a sacred and hallowed thing and even appears twice as a goddess.¹⁸ In the religious life of Rome, *fides* also had a very real and conspicuous place, including as a goddess who enjoyed a particularly close association with Jupiter; this is illustrated by the proximity of the temple of Fides Publica to that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline.¹⁹ This state-cult might be recalled with particular irony in the present context, where Hannibal violates Carthage's treaty with Rome; for in the area around Fides' Capitoline temple were displayed Rome's international treaties and alliances.²⁰

Hannibal's subsequent spear-cast, with which he strikes the Saguntine Caicus, further underlines his faithlessness and impiety, and their interrelatedness:

verba ocius acer
intorto sancit iaculo figitque per arma
stantem pro muro et minitantem vana Caicum. (Sil. 1.304–6)

No sooner than he spoke, he fiercely sanctions his words by throwing a spear and hits Caicus through the armour while he stands on the wall, making vain threats.

Parallels in Greek and Roman epic mark this gesture as signalling a declaration of war or an initiation of hostilities,²¹ but, given its coincidence with the violation of Carthage's treaty with Rome (e.g., *abrupto foedere*, 1.296), two parallels especially come to mind. One is the arrow-shot with which Pandarus breaks the truce between the Trojans and Greeks and wounds Menelaus in *Iliad* 4 (104–47).²² The other – a still closer parallel – is the spear-cast with which Tolumnius breaks a similar truce between the Trojans and Rutilians and strikes one of Gylippus' sons in *Aeneid* 12 (257–76).²³

Roman religious practice offers another comparandum, the declaration of war (*indictio belli*) of the *fetiales*.²⁴ These priests, who oversaw international disputes, were charged with demanding redress from foreign states, with declaring war if their demands were not met, and with ratifying peace upon

the cessation of hostilities; at every step in this process they carefully followed religious rites to ensure divine sanction for their actions, and, in the case of a declaration of war, that meant verifying that the war they were to wage was just, a *bellum iustum*.²⁵ As the rites they performed in the *indictio belli* were extensive and complex, Hannibal's own declaration can only evoke them in abbreviated form: the demands and conditions he sets forth (300–4) recall their demand for redress, which necessarily precedes the declaration, and his spear-cast (304–6) evokes the declaration itself, which the *fetiales* made by throwing a spear into enemy territory or into a space symbolically representative thereof. Of particular importance for our understanding of the parallel, however, is its moral resonance, which sets Hannibal's perfidy and impiety in stark relief. In this respect, two details merit our attention. First, everything the *fetiales* did was in the purview of *fides*, and their name was even derived from the word. As Varro explains:

Fetiales, quod fidei publicae inter populos praeerant: nam per hos fiebat ut iustum conciperetur bellum, et inde desitum, ut foedere fides pacis constitueretur. ex his mittebantur, ante quam conciperetur, qui res repeterent, et per hos etiam nunc fit foedus, quod fidus Ennius scribit dictum. (Var. L. 5.86)

The *fetiales* [were so called] because they were in charge of public *fides* between peoples; for through them it would happen that a just war was undertaken and, when it was over, a peace was established with a treaty. Of these some would be sent to demand redress before the war began, and even today through them a treaty is struck, which, as Ennius writes, was pronounced *fidus*.²⁶

Second, Jupiter, who is otherwise a god of oaths and connected with *fides*, is a centrally important god for the *fetiales* as well, particularly in the form of Jupiter Feretrius and Jupiter Lapis, and, we might further recall, the treaty between Rome and Carthage, an event over which the *fetiales* would have presided, was expressly said to have been sworn by this god in the epic's proem (*iuratumque Iovi foedus*, 1.9).²⁷ And so, although Hannibal's gesture is evocative of the fetial *indictio belli*, it represents a perversion or, as Feeney calls it, a parody of the rite:²⁸ by initiating hostilities at Saguntum and thus violating Carthage's treaty with Rome, Hannibal exhibits *perfidia* rather than *fides* and even behaves impiously, offending the gods, above all, Jupiter, the very god by whom, we might suppose, the *fetiales* swore when initially ratifying the treaty. To be sure, what Hannibal is declaring here is not a *bellum iustum* and is unlikely to receive divine endorsement as one.

Hannibal's actions constitute a still more pointed provocation of the gods: he claims, after all, to possess, in lieu of them (*deos*, 1.303), the authority to

sanction his own actions and then exercises that authority when throwing his spear and declaring war (*verba sancit*, 1.304–5). The impiety of Hannibal's gesture here is, to a certain extent, self-evident,²⁹ but it is also confirmed by two epic parallels, one of which suggests that the Carthaginian's self-sanctioning is a specific challenge to Jupiter's sanctioning authority. His claim to have the gods in his right hand (1.303–4) and subsequent spear-cast, whereby he strikes Caicus (1.304–9), call to mind, for one, Virgil's *contemptor divum* (*A.* 7.468) Mezentius, when, in *Aeneid* 10, he addresses his right hand as if it were a god (773–6) and then strikes Antores with his spear (776–82). The other epic moment, which is modelled after the former, involves a figure also known for his *Götterfeindschaft*, Statius' Capaneus: in *Thebaid* 9, he likewise addresses his right hand as a divinity (548–50) before striking an enemy, the Theban Hypseus, with his spear (551–6).³⁰ Both parallels, as we can see, figure Hannibal as a rival of the gods, and of Jupiter in particular.³¹ In sum, Hannibal indeed shows himself to be one of those *Sidonii duces* (1.10) of whom Silius spoke in the epic's proem, but, instead of using an *impius ensis* (1.10) to break the peace and violate *fides*, he uses a spear (*iaculo*, 1.305).

Jupiter's "Response"

After Caicus' death, fighting at Saguntum ensues (1.310–534). Here we witness the Saguntines' response to Hannibal's declaration of war, a response that squarely sets the issue of *fides* before us. On the one hand, there are the Saguntines, who are recognized for their *fides*, both as a whole (1.329–33) and individually, most notably, Daunus (1.440–7) and Murrus (1.482–7); on the other hand, there is Hannibal, who persists not only in his faithlessness, but in his impiety (see, esp., 1.479–82). But there is still another response to come. After Hannibal slays Murrus and the Saguntines close in around him (1.518–34):

hic subitus scisso densa inter nubila caelo
erupit quatiens terram fragor, et super ipsas
bis pater intonuit geminato fulmine pugnās.
inde inter nubes ventorum turbine caeco
ultrix iniusti vibravit lancea belli
ac femine aduerso librata cuspidē sedit.

(Sil. 1.535–40)

Here a sudden crash split the sky and burst through the thick clouds, shaking the earth, and twice the Father thundered over the battle itself with a twin lightning bolt. Then a spear, propelled by a blind whirlwind through the clouds, avenging the unjust war, quivered and with its poised tip lodged itself in the front of Hannibal's thigh.

After briefly considering what might have happened had the spear killed Hannibal (1.541–7), Silius has Juno come to the rescue and pull the spear out of the Carthaginian's thigh (1.548–52). Thereafter, Hannibal limps off the battlefield (1.553–5), night falls (1.556–7), and the opening phase of the battle at Saguntum comes to a close.

The spear that strikes Hannibal has historical basis; Livy 21.7.10 tells us that he incautiously stormed the city walls and was struck in the thigh by a javelin. Silius adapts this historical detail to draw our attention to Hannibal's faithlessness. One way in which he does so is by alluding to the breaking of the truce between Latinus and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 12. That event in Virgil's epic, specifically, Tolumnius' spear-cast (*A.* 12.257–76), was previously echoed, we recall, in the spear-cast with which Hannibal declared war on Saguntum (1.304–9). Here Silius alludes to events that occur shortly after the violation of that truce: Hannibal is wounded by a spear thrown by an unknown hand (1.538–40), just as Aeneas, when intervening in an effort to preserve the truce, is struck by an arrow shot by an unknown hand (*A.* 12.312–17); Juno extracts the spear from Hannibal (1.548–52), just as Venus helps Iapyx extract the arrow from Aeneas (*A.* 12.411–24); and Hannibal leaves the battle after being wounded (1.553–5), just as Aeneas does (*A.* 12.324–5).³² While encouraging us to read Hannibal in relation Virgil's Aeneas, Silius is not really comparing them, but is calling attention to a significant moral difference between them: Aeneas is trying to preserve a treaty, whereas Hannibal is breaking one. The parallels with *Aeneid* 12, therefore, highlight the issue of *fides* and its violation in Silius' text and, in particular, invite us to see the avenging spear that strikes Hannibal (*ultrix lancea*, 1.539) as a response to the treaty-breaking spear he cast when he initiated hostilities.

Another way in which this scene looks back to that spear-cast is by evoking the fetials' *indictio belli*, and in doing so it calls attention not only to the Carthaginian's *perfidia* but to his *impietas*. In addition to the detail of the spear itself, Silius' description of it as *ultrix iniusti lancea belli* (1.539) reminds us that the fetial rite was performed to ensure that the war being declared was a just war, a *bellum iustum*. This detail also confirms, of course, that Hannibal's spear-cast was a failed or illegitimate performance of the rite, one that has not secured the approval of the gods and thus has not ensured the justice of his war; hence, he wages, rather, a *bellum iniustum*. Another consideration here is the involvement of Jupiter, who stirs up the storm (*pater*, 1.537). Jupiter, as we have noted, is an important god for the *fetiales*. Here, though, the god does not simply preside over this fetial-like event, or endorse it, but appears to take a more active, direct role. Granted, Silius does not say who throws the spear that wounds Hannibal, but, as he indicates that the storm the god has stirred up helps to propel it – note *turbine* (1.538) – he implies that the god himself aids it in hitting its mark.³³

Two epic parallels lend support to this inference. As Spaltenstein notes, there are several verbal echoes of Jupiter's punishment of his impious mortal rival Salmoneus, as described in *Aeneid* 6:

at pater omnipotens densa inter nubila telum
contorsit, non ille faces nec fumea taedis
lumina, praecipitemque immani turbine adegit. (Virg. A. 6.592–4)

But through the thick clouds the all-powerful father hurled his weapon, not torches nor the smoking light from torches, and drove him headlong in a great whirlwind.³⁴

Another epic parallel is the punishment of Capaneus at the hands of Jupiter at the end of *Thebaid* 10. The Silian phrase *ultrix lancea* (1.537) echoes Statius' *tela ultricia* when the gods urge Jupiter to punish Capaneus there: *premit undique letum / turba deum frendens et tela ultricia poscit* ("The gods, complaining from all sides, urge him, as he wavers, and demand avenging weapons," *Theb.* 10.910–11). Statius' Jupiter goes on to stir up a storm in which he strikes Capaneus down (*Theb.* 10.913–39), just as the god does when wounding Hannibal in *Punica* 1.³⁵ Both parallels, as we can see, point to Jupiter's involvement in the spear that strikes Hannibal and, with that, underline the Carthaginian's impiety. In sum, the impression one gets is that Jupiter is himself performing an *indictio belli* here and is offering a definitive and authoritative response to Hannibal's prior declaration of war. We are thus assured not only that the Carthaginian perversely appropriated and performed that rite earlier, but was very wrong indeed to lay claim to the god's power to sanction it at that time; for the principal god of the *fetiales*, Jupiter, is now performing and sanctioning the rite himself.³⁶

What further underpins this reading of the two spear-casts in relation to one another is the structural feature of ring-composition:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1.296–309: | Hannibal's spear-cast: declaration of war |
| 1.310–534: | Battle outside Saguntum |
| 1.535–55: | Jupiter's spear-cast: "response" |

Note the extreme positions of the casts in this opening phase of combat: Hannibal's cast initiates the battle, and Jupiter's closes it out.³⁷ The connection between the two episodes is reinforced, as we have seen, by their thematic or motival coherence, the spear-casts being evocative of the fetal *indictio belli*, and by their relation to common epic parallels, such as the truce and its violation in *Aeneid* 12 or Statius' Capaneus. In all of these ways, Silius invites us to read Jupiter's spear-cast as a corrective or a response to

Hannibal's spear-cast, as the god's final "say" on the matter: Hannibal has acted perfidiously and impiously, and it is now time for the injured third party, Jupiter, to get involved, to express his displeasure, to declare war on Hannibal, and to show himself to be, in contrast to the Carthaginian, a representative and defender of *fides* and *pietas*.

Beyond Saguntum

The interrelation of the virtues *fides* and *pietas*, or of their corresponding vices *perfidia* and *impietas*, has not always been fully appreciated in studies of the *Punica*. This is not necessarily surprising: many characters in the epic who exhibit these qualities do not combine them, whether the pairing is *fides-pietas* or *perfidia-impietas*, or do not do so consistently enough to command our close attention. Hannibal, though, is one of the characters who does, and this is not only because he is the most conspicuous character or "hero" (in the narratological sense) in the *Punica*, but because the proem and the spear-casts at Saguntum assure us of that fact. Indeed, on the Carthaginian side, the moral logic Silius sets forth in these moments in his text, that *perfidia* and *impietas* are of a piece with each other, is applicable, and almost uniquely so, to Hannibal. After all, by instigating the war, he is the one most responsible for violating Carthage's treaty with Rome and is thus most guilty of *perfidia*, and as the one who thereby offends the divine third party that sanctioned the treaty, Jupiter, he is most guilty of *impietas* as well. Throughout the epic, he continues to be associated with these vices, and his impiety, in particular, comes into clearer focus as events unfold; one thinks especially of his conflict with Jupiter when he besieges Rome (12.558–752) or of the abiding hostility toward the god that he expresses in his parting speech at Zama (17.605–15). The proem and the spear-casts at Saguntum combine, therefore, not only to impress upon us the interrelatedness of perfidy and impiety, but to signal its special applicability to Hannibal in the epic. The Second Punic War is, indeed, Hannibal's war, and it is, at one and the same time, a faithless attack on Rome and an impious assault on Jupiter.³⁸

These early moments in the epic also anticipate two of Hannibal's major opponents in the war. One is, of course, Jupiter himself, whose spear-cast at Saguntum not only responds to Hannibal's, but prefigures the god's later confrontation with him at Rome in Book 12.³⁹ But Hannibal faces mortal combatants as well, and we might be reminded, in particular, of those whose *fides* and *pietas* are exemplary and who stand in sharp contrast to him in these respects, such as Fabius or Paulus or, of Rome's allies, the Saguntines.⁴⁰ But I would submit that Scipio Africanus, who is Hannibal's chief rival in the later books of the epic, is especially foreshadowed

here. We first catch a glimpse of his *fides* after the Cannae defeat, when he prevents the desertion of Metellus and his co-conspirators at Canusium (10.415–48), but his association with this virtue is most evident when he emerges as a leader in his own right: we see it, for example, when he forms alliances with Masinissa (16.115–69) and Syphax (16.170–274) – he is the only Roman to strike such international agreements in the epic⁴¹ – and, most importantly, when he heals divisions within Rome herself, unifying its people and senate under his dynamic leadership in Books 15–16.⁴² As for *pietas*, Scipio gives proof of his *pietas erga parentem* early on when he rescues his father at the Ticinus (4.445–79) and continues to show such devotion in later books, as when he celebrates funeral games in honour of his father and uncle (16.275–591). And yet, we also learn that he is actually the son of Jupiter (esp. 13.615–49). Accordingly, Scipio, who otherwise stands in close relation to the god – it is many times indicated that he serves in the war as Jupiter’s hand-picked vicegerent on earth – enjoys a still more intimate, personal connection with him, his *pietas erga deum* or *lovem* being, in effect, a form of *pietas erga parentem*.⁴³ I might also point out that one of the few times the words *fides* and *pietas* appear in close proximity in the epic is when Scipio is contrasted with Hannibal: when the two face off at Cannae, the Roman is said to be “better in *pietas* and *fides*” than the Carthaginian (*melior pietate fideque*, 9.437).⁴⁴

Additional details encourage us to read Scipio in specific connection with the proem and the spear-casts at Saguntum and to anticipate his *fides* and *pietas* as an antidote to Hannibalic *perfidia* and *impietas*. One is the spear-cast with which Scipio honours the memory of his father and uncle at the end of the funeral games for them in Book 16: he throws a spear that, upon landing, turns into an oak tree (16.580–9). The omen testifies to Scipio’s *pietas* toward the deceased but also looks ahead to his subsequent invasion of Africa and his victory there over Hannibal (cf. 16.590–1); the spear-cast effectively signals, then, Scipio’s declaration of war on Hannibal’s homeland.⁴⁵ Also telling is that this cast is made in Spain, the same land in which Hannibal declared war by throwing his spear, and that one of the outcomes of the African campaign to which it looks ahead is Scipio’s close relation to Jupiter; for, after the Zama victory closes out the war, we witness the Roman’s triumphal procession to the god’s Capitoline temple (17.625–52) and meet with a final assertion of his Jovian paternity (17.653–4). Scipio’s spear-cast, therefore, responds to that with which Hannibal initiated hostilities at Saguntum and, in doing so, sets him squarely against the Carthaginian, but it also replicates Jupiter’s response to Hannibal’s cast on that occasion and aligns him closely with the god and the god’s opposition to the Carthaginian. These connections, I might add, are prepared for in the proem

as well. Note, for one, that the only two characters to appear in the epic who are mentioned there are Jupiter (*Iovi*, 1.9) and, a little later, Scipio (*Dardanus ductor*, 1.14–15).⁴⁶ Second, the only two events in the epic to which Silius refers in the proem – he even juxtaposes them – are Scipio’s final victory over Carthage in Book 17 (1.14–15) and the defence of Rome against Hannibal’s siege in Book 12 (1.15–16); this detail links Scipio to Jupiter because the god is the one who will defend Rome.⁴⁷ And so, from the very beginning of the epic, we expect the “Jovian” Scipio to punish Hannibal for his perfidy and impiety, just as his father Jupiter will.

To conclude, a few words about Flavian Rome. As I have argued elsewhere, Scipio’s rise to prominence in later books of the *Punica* is a key to understanding the epic’s engagement with the Flavian context in which it was composed; specifically, his emergence as a uniquely powerful individual who unifies the Roman people and senate and serves as the executor of Jupiter’s will on earth reflects contemporary views of the Flavian Principate and, in particular, invites comparison with the reign of Domitian, under whom most of the epic was written.⁴⁸ The alignment of *fides* and *pietas* in Scipio and his divine father and their shared opposition to Hannibal, the epic’s most conspicuous example of *perfidia* and *impietas*, cohere well with this historicizing interpretation of the poem. As other contributions show, *fides* was a critically important concept for the Flavians, who were establishing their rule in the wake of civil war. But *pietas* or, rather, a specific form of it, *pietas erga lovem*, was a virtue especially associated with Domitian, and this association was grounded in a civil war event: Domitian’s escape from the Capitoline during the Vitellian assault in December, AD 69. While Domitian went on to honour Jupiter in many ways for the protection he enjoyed from the god on that occasion, poets, such as Martial (9.101.14) and Statius (*Theb.* 1.21–22; *Silv.* 1.1.79), flipped the script, portraying Domitian as the defender of the Capitoline and the protector of its chief god, and even depicted the Vitellians as impious Giants or Titans (e.g., Mart. 5.5.7–8; Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.196–7). We may well hear, then, a resonance of that event and its commemoration in Scipio’s and Jupiter’s collective opposition to Hannibal in the *Punica*; for, like Domitian and his divine, Capitoline ally, they too work together to repel and vanquish a perfidious, impious foe.⁴⁹

NOTES

- 1 For the Latin text, I use Delz 1987; all translations are my own.
- 2 On the tradition of Carthaginian perfidy in Rome, see Devallet 1996 and Waldherr 2000.

- 3 For major treatments of *fides* in the epic, which raise these points, see Albrecht 1964: 55–86; Kissel 1979: 96–100; Burck 1988; Thomas 2001; and Pomeroy 2010b.
- 4 Pomeroy 2010b: 64: “the rejection of the actions of the city’s councillors (*patres*) in renewing hostilities is also an act of *impietas*, since it denies the rights of the elders to decide foreign policy.” This interpretation is consistent with the Romans’ understanding of *pietas* as pertinent to blood relations (on which, see Schröder 2012: esp. 345–53), and with Silius’ use of the term, which regularly reflects that understanding (e.g., 2.632, 4.396 and 470, 5.317, 6.410, 10.138, 13.391 and 749, 16.474). Since the Roman senate does not stand in such relation to Carthage’s leaders, their violation of that senate’s *conventa* would be an act of *perfidia*, not *impietas*. Feeney 1982: 18–19, differently, takes *patrum* to refer to the Roman senate, and Duff 1934: 9 appears to do so as well; Spaltenstein 1986: 4 is undecided. I side with Pomeroy on the matter, and, in addition to 12.678–80 (*pacta patrum*), which he cites (following an observation of Spaltenstein’s) in defence of this position, one might compare 1.303–4 (*scita patrum*), discussed below, and 2.273–4 (*pacta parentum*).
- 5 So, Albrecht 1964: 18: “[The Carthaginian side] stellt sich gegen Iupiter, da sie das bei seinem Namen beschworene Bündnis mit Füßen tritt (1, 2–11). Nicht weit ist für römisches Denken der Schritt vom juristischen Unrecht zum religiösen Frevel: Wer sich an Bündnis, Ordnung und Frieden vergeht, stellt sich gegen den obersten Gott.” Similarly, Thomas 2001: 4 and Pomeroy 2010b: 64. Lines 1.8–11 thus elaborate on what is implied by the adjective *sacer* in 1.5 (*sacri ... pacti*).
- 6 Albrecht 1964: 18; Feeney 1982: 17; Pomeroy 2010b: 64.
- 7 Spaltenstein 1986: 4.
- 8 Jupiter is named eighty-five times in the epic, seventy-nine times without an epithet indicating which god is meant (e.g., *Tarpeius*, *corniger*). By my count, if we exclude those instances where the name is a metonym for weather and leave aside *Iovi* in 1.9, which is the instance under question, we are left with seventy-four occurrences of the name, and of those only six refer to Hammon, but sixty-eight to the Roman Jupiter.
- 9 Spaltenstein 1986: 4; cf. Feeney 1982: 17.
- 10 It is unclear to which treaties Polybius specifically refers; he has previously mentioned three (509, 348, 279/8 BC). Walbank 1957: 353 believes that he means that the Carthaginians swore by their gods in every instance, but the Romans by Jupiter Lapis in the first and by Mars and Quirinus, who are mentioned moments later (τὸν Ἄρην καὶ τὸν Ἐνυάλιον, 3.25.6), in the latter two. Incidentally, if *Marte* (1.8) may be understood not only as a metonym for “war” or “warfare” but as the god himself, then Mars might be regarded, in a manner consistent with Polybius’ statement, as one of the injured parties. This

would further corroborate the Roman identification of *Iovi* (1.9), there being no Carthaginian equivalent of Mars. Cf. Pomeroy 2010b: 64: “the actions of the Carthaginian generals (*duces*) are depicted first as an attack on the very gods (Jupiter and Mars specifically).”

- 11 Also, compare 1.479–82 (esp. *deceptos deos*, 482) in Hannibal’s speech to Murrus (with note 17, below). For a different reading of these lines, see Fucecchi in this volume.
- 12 For Jupiter and oaths, see Freyburger 1986: 282–4, 288–92.
- 13 *Fides* and *pietas* are often observed to co-exist as virtues, and *perfidia* and *impietas* as vices (especially in Hannibal), but how they are otherwise connected or interrelated has received little attention.
- 14 Pomeroy 2010b: 61.
- 15 Hannibal’s disregard of treaties was also noted immediately before Silius turned his attention to events at Saguntum: *rumpere foedera certus* (1.268).
- 16 For *dextra* and *fides*, see Freyburger 1986: 131, 136–42, 155–60, 181–5, 191–3, 236–7, 249–58, 277–8.
- 17 The combination of Hannibal’s impiety and perfidy was prepared for in an earlier portrait of him (*fideique sinister / is fuit*, 1.56–7; *armato nullus divum pudor*; 1.58; cf. Liv. 21.4.9) and was reinforced in the oath-scene, where, as a boy, he swears that he will let neither the gods (*superi*) nor peace agreements (*Martem cohibentia pacta*) prevent him from waging war on Rome (1.116–17). The point is also underlined after his declaration of war, when he taunts the Saguntine Murrus in the subsequent battle: *fer tecum castamque fidem servataque iura, / deceptos mihi linque deos* (1.481–2). Contrast the Carthaginian senate, when weighing the “pros” and “cons” of Hannibal’s war in Spain: *movet hinc foedusque fidesque / et testes superi iurataque pacta parentum* (2.273–4).
- 18 *Fides* is *sacrata* (1.634), *sancta* (2.479–80, 13.749), and *sacra* (13.282). As a goddess, she appears in 2.475–525 and 13.281–91; also, see 1.329–30 (*numen ... fides*; cf. Albrecht 1964: 56n7), 6.468 (*diva Fides*), 6.547–8, and Fucecchi in this volume.
- 19 On *fides* in Roman religion, see Freyburger 1986: 99–225. On the goddess *Fides*, see Freyburger 1986: 227–330 (on *fides* and Jupiter: 282–98). For her close relation to Jupiter in the *Punica*, note, for example, 2.496–8.
- 20 On *Fides*’ temple, see Freyburger 1986: 259–73. Culham 1989: 108–111 collects the evidence for the display of treaties and foreign policy measures on the Capitoline and observes *Fides*’ close relation to Jupiter in connection therewith.
- 21 For parallels, see Spaltenstein 1986: 52.
- 22 Küppers 1986: 127–8.
- 23 Lebek 1976: 249–50; Küppers 1986: 127–8. Hannibal’s sanctioning of his words by hurling his spear (*verba ... / ... sancit iaculo*, 1.304–5) may also remind us

of Latinus' invocation of Jupiter as one who sanctions treaties with lightning when the king strikes a ceasefire agreement with Aeneas: *audiat haec genitor qui foedera fulmine sancit* (A. 12.200). The echo would fittingly underline the contradictory nature of Hannibal's act in a way that reinforces its relation to the events of *Aeneid* 12; for Hannibal (like Latinus) is making an oath, but (like Tolumnius) is violating a treaty at the same time. The echo would also seem to figure Hannibal as an impious rival of Jupiter, for the Carthaginian aims to sanction his oath by hurling a weapon (spear), just as Jupiter sanctions treaties with his own weapon (lightning).

- 24 A comparison drawn by Feeney 1982: 169; Spaltenstein 1986: 52; and Stocks 2014: 107.
- 25 For the fetial rite of *indictio belli*, see Rüpke 1990: 97–109. On the idea of *bellum iustum*, see Rüpke 1990: 117–22.
- 26 For more on *fides* and the fetials, see Freyburger 1986: 237–8.
- 27 The *fetiales* would invoke Jupiter as a witness when making demands for redress (e.g., Liv. 1.32.6–7), would do so again if their demands were not met (e.g., Liv. 1.32.9–10), and swore by him and made sacrifices in his name when making treaties (e.g., Plb. 3.25.6–7, Liv. 1.24.7–8). Other gods, usually unnamed terrestrial, chthonic, and/or celestial gods, might also be invoked during their rites (e.g., Liv. 1.32.9–10, D.H. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.6, 8). For the fetials' connection with Jupiter, see Rüpke 1990: 111–15.
- 28 Feeney 1982: 169, followed by Stocks 2014: 107.
- 29 Cf. Feeney 1982: 168–9 on *sancit*: “the verb's religious aura is belied by the impious character of the ‘sanctifier,’ while Hannibal is breaking a treaty rather than establishing one.”
- 30 For the parallel with Capaneus here, see Marks 2014: 134. It cannot be said for certain which poet is alluding to which because the relative chronology of the composition of Silius' and Statius' epics is unclear. But who came first may not matter for demonstrating Hannibal's impiety toward Jupiter in this instance; for if Silius is alluding to Statius, then Silius is portraying Hannibal as an impious Capaneus-figure, and if Statius is alluding to Silius, then Statius has presumably read Silius to be portraying the Carthaginian as such an impious figure and thus finds in him a suitable model for his own Capaneus. Feeney 1982: 51, commenting on 1.58 (*armato nullus divum pudor*), likewise compares Hannibal with Mezentius and Capaneus and notes Greek antecedents in Aeschylus' *Parthenopaeus* (*Sept.* 529–32) and Apollonius' *Idas* (A. R. 1.466–70).
- 31 It should also be noted that Hannibal and Capaneus are Jupiter's chief mortal rivals in their respective epics and even face off against the god at one point, Hannibal at Rome toward the end of *Punica* 12, Capaneus at Thebes toward the end of *Thebaid* 10. For the similarities between Hannibal and Capaneus in these instances, see Venini 1969: 781–3 and Fucecchi 1990a: 31–2. The identification

of Hannibal with Capaneus may also be hinted at in the ensuing battle outside Saguntum, when the Carthaginian hurls fire at the enemy; so, Küppers 1986: 128n421).

- 32 The parallels are noted by Spaltenstein 1986: 83. Silius also alludes to these events a little earlier, when Hannibal, vaunting to Murrus, uses the same clausula Aeneas uses when trying to halt the fighting after the treaty is broken: *foedera, faxo, / iam noscas, quid vana queant et vester Hiberus* (Sil. 1.479–80) = *ego foedera faxo / firma manu* (A. 12.316–17). The only other instance of the clausula is V. Fl. 7.177. One might also compare the wounding of Menelaus in *Iliad* 4, on which the wounding of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 12 is itself based, although there are fewer similarities with Hannibal's wounding (e.g., Menelaus enjoys divine help when he is initially wounded – Athena makes the arrow graze him (*Il.* 4.107–47) – not later, when he receives medical attention (*Il.* 4.188–219), and he is not removed from the battlefield).
- 33 So, Albrecht 1964: 27; Feeney 1982: 271–2; Spaltenstein 1986: 82; and Stocks 2014: 112.
- 34 Spaltenstein 1986: 83. Note *pater* (1.537), *densa inter nubila* (1.535), and *turbine* (1.539) in Silius' text. Also, compare Silius' *lancea* (1.537) with Virgil's *telum*.
- 35 These parallels are noted by Marks 2014: 134.
- 36 As Jupiter's intervention is accompanied by lightning (*fulmine*, 1.537), we might again be reminded of Latinus' description of the god as *qui foedera fulmine sancit* (A. 12.200). If so, this puts a still finer point on the contrast between Jupiter as a true or valid sanctioner of oaths and Hannibal as a false one and an impious rival of the god. See above note 23.
- 37 That Jupiter's response closes out this narrative section is also underlined by the fact that, immediately thereafter, nightfall is said to put an end to the day's fighting (1.556–7).
- 38 For a rather different interpretation, see Fucecchi in this volume, who sees greater ambiguity in the notion of Punic (and Roman) *fides* and offers a somewhat more sympathetic reading of Hannibal.
- 39 On Jupiter's defence of Rome prefigured there, see Albrecht 1964: 27.
- 40 Another notable figure of *fides*, who shows remarkable devotion to Rome (*pietas erga patriam*), is Regulus, a hero in the First Punic War, whose story is recounted at length in Book 6 (117–551). Decius, who opposes Capua's defection from the Roman cause, also stands out for his *fides* and *pietas* (11.155–258).
- 41 The treaty with Syphax does not hold, however, and, tellingly, this is due not only to his faithlessness – he betrays Rome by joining the Carthaginian cause (17.59–75) – but also to his impiety; on the latter, see 16.258–74 with Marks 2005: 174–5.
- 42 The issue of *fides* is quite complicated in the epic; for the Romans must not only defend themselves against a perfidious foe but also confront a crisis of *fides*

from within, as they struggle to stick together after several defeats early in the war and are abandoned by allies, most notably Capua, which switches sides in the conflict in Book 11. For Rome's internal divisions, see Marks 2005: 15–20, 266–7, and 277–9, and Marks 2010: 132–9. Also, see Dominik 2003: 482–5, 490–1, who argues that Rome fails to exhibit due *fides* in response to Hannibal's siege of Saguntum. For Scipio as a unifying figure, see Marks 2005: 93–110.

- 43 On Scipio's double-paternity, see Marks 2005: 187–94. On Scipio as Jupiter's vicegerent, see Marks 2005: 163–9, 201–6.
- 44 The only other instance involves Scipio and Hannibal as well, when Scipio encounters the shade of Hannibal's father, Hamilcar, who praises his son as follows: *o pietas, o sancta fides, o vera propago!* (13.749). Hamilcar's words strike a perverse note because Hannibal is notoriously faithless and, while he may have been motivated by *pietas* toward his father (e.g., 1.70–119), that devotion sets him at odds with Jupiter and thus renders him, ironically, impious. An allusion here to Virgil's moving portrait of Marcellus in *A.* 6.878 renders Hamilcar's praise still more awkward. The only other instance in which these nouns and/or their antonyms (*perfidia*, *impietas*) and/or related adjectival forms (e.g., *fidus*, *infidus*, *perfidus*, *pius*, *impius*) appear in the same line is 2.651 (*fidei ... piorum*: Saguntines). Otherwise, the next closest instance of such a pairing occurs within three lines (*piorum*, 2.698: Saguntines; *fidem*, 2.701: Hannibal's disregard of *fides*), and the next closest after that within five lines (*perfida*, 1.5; *impius*, 1.10: proem).
- 45 For more on this spear-cast and omen, see Marks 2005: 101, 179–86.
- 46 Unless we take *Marte* (1.8) to refer to the god rather than as a metonym for war.
- 47 Scipio's close relation to Jupiter (and their shared hostility toward Hannibal) is also indicated by parallels between the events themselves to which Silius refers here, Scipio's victory at Zama and Jupiter's defeat of Hannibal at Rome; see Marks 2005: 194–200. Hence, it turns out not only that Scipio, when throwing the spear in Book 15, mirrors Jupiter throwing his spear in Book 1, but that the subsequent event to which his spear-cast looks ahead (victory at Zama) itself mirrors the subsequent event to which Jupiter's spear-cast looked ahead (victory at Rome).
- 48 Marks 2005.
- 49 For more on Domitian's relation to Jupiter in Flavian Rome and how it mirrors Scipio's relation to the god in the *Punica*, see Marks 2005: 230–5.

Hannibal as (Anti-)Hero of *Fides* in Silius' *Punica*

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Silius' poem is programmatically built on the hostile opposition between two cities who fight for survival and world supremacy. This scenario enacts a confrontation between the cultural patterns and systems of values on the Roman and Carthaginian side, respectively, values that include moral concepts like *fides*.¹ In this regard, the difference between Rome and Carthage is a structural one. As a pivotal component of the Roman moral code identified with mutual trust, loyalty, and honesty, *fides* (and the divine personification Fides) represents a public value, which permeates all relationships: from those among family members or fellow citizens to those of the state with foreign countries. Carthage, on the contrary, is traditionally represented by Roman writers as a symbolic embodiment of betrayal and faithlessness, to the point that *Punica fides* ends up coinciding with the notion of *perfidia* – that is, the antonym of *fides* itself.²

One can find traces of this polarization, well attested in most of our literary sources for the Punic wars, also in the Flavian remake of the historical epic, where it clearly points to the celebratory intent of the glorious republican past. Silius, however, does not merely aim at bringing to the fore the opposition between Rome, the city of *fides*, and the “perfidious” Carthage. In his poem, we could say, such polarization does not exclude problematization. Despite depicting *fides* as a significant unifying factor within Roman society, the *Punica* often hints at a dark looming future: the social body already shows signs of the crisis that one century later will lead to civil wars and long-term antagonism between military leaders putting their own ambitions ahead of the country's moral values, *fides* included. Yet, Rome's steady recovery after Cannae and its subsequent victory over its worst enemy give evidence of the innate qualities of a city destined to become the *caput mundi*. It is thanks to this moral heritage, as Jupiter announces in the prophecy of

Punica Book 3, that Rome will survive the crisis and reach the very acme of its power when a new dynasty of emperors, the Flavians, will ascend to power: a dynasty whose propaganda (of course not by chance) will draw extensively on the concept of *fides*.

In this chapter, however, I intend to concentrate mostly on the other side of the story, that of Rome's enemy. In fact, Silius' Carthage cannot be simplistically defined as "the land without *fides*." On the contrary, it represents the place where it all starts: the place in which the concept (before Rome's birth) begins to assume an anti-Roman connotation. Heir of Dido's anger toward the unfaithful Aeneas and his (Roman) descendants, Hannibal leads his military campaign against Italy, displaying a "private," family-centred, and perverted notion of *fides*. In fact, the devotion toward his ancestors as well as the way he undertakes his father Hamilcar's *Furiae* (1.444) brings this concept closer to the notion of *pietas*.³ Such a "subjective" interpretation stands in sharp contrast to the "positive," that is "objective," cultural construct of the (Roman) *fides*. Punic *fides* originates from the memory of the queen-founder's humiliation and, thus, winds up encompassing a series of notions: revenge, but also expansionism and imperialism. Hannibal embodies the anti-hero of *fides* (or the hero of an anti-*fides*?) until the very end of the poem, when, after leaving the battlefield of Zama, he flees, threatening that he will never give up fighting. Nonetheless, his unfailing loyalty to Carthage may also function as the "official pretext" for dissimulating bellicism and growing anxiety of conquest. Sometimes, Hannibal's attitude collides with other ("private" in a more precise sense, personal) manifestations of the concept, such as the duties he has to his own family members as husband and father. As his wife, Imilce, fears, Hannibal's obsessive focus on conquering Italy and overthrowing Jupiter may perilously lead him to forget his own identity. And, when fortune begins to abandon the Carthaginian leader and he is about to leave the Italian shore, an extreme act of rebellion occurs, which shows how (the Roman) Hannibal truly feels like an *exul* forced to abandon his homeland, the country to which he seems now inclined to offer his *fides*.

Exploring Punic *Fides*

We have said that Silius draws largely upon the tradition of the so-called *Punica fides*, a notoriously oxymoronic collocation. Yet this is only one side of the coin. His representation of *fides* among the Carthaginians is far from unproblematic: the first occurrence of the word already suffices to prove that this is true. At *Punica* 1.56, Hannibal is said to be *fidei* ... *sinister*, a complex syntagm, in which *fidei* may be interpreted as a genitive of limitation, meaning

"perverse as regards *fides*," "whose sense of loyalty is perverted (not absent)."⁴ Thus, while apparently pointing to the paradoxical equivalence between Carthaginian *fides* and *perfidia*, Silius seems rather to challenge the commonly held view about the Carthaginians' penchant for treachery.

On closer inspection, the concept involving social rules, laws, and international *foedera* (with reference to the pact with Rome after the First Punic War) is also known and even practised in Hannibal's homeland. Such a notion of *fides*, however, is recognized as a moral and socio-political value by only a small group of Carthaginian senators. But the word also has another and more popular meaning among the Carthaginians: a family-centred notion which we might call the "Barcid interpretation" of *fides*, tracing back to Aeneas' and Dido's story and resulting in the latter's hatred and curse.⁵ In Hannibal's view, *fides* means "no *foedera*" (with Rome) and foreshadows revenge, thus making his mission against Rome reflect a large popular consensus. The fundamental assumption here is that Carthage is the injured party, since it underwent injustice and even piracy before the foundation of Rome. From this perspective, Hannibal is conceived of as a legendary *exemplum* of *fides erga patriam*, whereas the heterodiegetic narrator turns him instead into an anti-hero of *fides*, who pretends to fight against Aeneas' descendants, the Romans. Thus, the "Barcid interpretation" perverts the meaning of concepts like *perfidus* and *perfidia*: the Romans are the true faithless, while Hannibal embodies the "perfect achievement of *fides*."

The Construction of an Ideology: Carthage's Response to Roman *Fides*

As already hinted at in Virgil, Hannibal follows in the footsteps of his father, Hamilcar Barca, undertaking the task of avenging Dido, the queen who founded Carthage and killed herself after being abandoned by the *perfidus* Aeneas:⁶

tandem his Aenean compellat vocibus ultro:
 "dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum
 posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?
 nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam
 nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido?"

(Virg. A. 4.304–8)

Finally, she broached the subject, addressing Aeneas as follows:

"Was it your hope to disguise, you perfidious cheat, such a monstrous
 Wrong, to get out, with no word said, from this land that I govern?

You are not bound by our union of love, by the hand you once gave me,
Nor does Dido, doomed to a cruel death, now detain you."

Dido rams the point home in her later assessment of Aeneas:

... en dextra fidesque,
quem secum patrios aiunt portare penates,
quem subiisse umeris confectum aetate parentem! (Virg. A. 4.597–9)

Witness the word and the honour of one, who, they say, carries with him
Gods of ancestral shrines, who once took on his shoulders his aged father!

And just like the *Aeneid*, the *Punica* too hosts antagonistic, pro-Carthaginian voices, which come from human characters, or even from non-verbal sources, such as images, or pictures. A prominent instance, in this sense, is offered by the ekphrasis of the shield that Hannibal receives as a gift from the tribes of ancient Galicia (Sil. 2.395–456). In the shield's iconographic program, characterized by strong propagandistic colour,⁷ the first sequence of images could properly be entitled as "the archaeology of Carthage." The ekphrasis consists of a (tendentious) summary of the first four books of Virgil's *Aeneid*, displaying the most important events from the city's foundation until Dido's suicide immediately after Aeneas' departure. A conspicuous place is given to the love affair: the *furtiva foedera amantum* ("the secret pacts of the lovers", 2.416), celebrated by Aeneas and Dido in the cave and engraved on the right side of the shield. In particular, the word *foedera*, in sharp contrast with the adjective, seems to carry a note of recrimination and may subtly resemble a (polemical?) response to Aeneas' self-defense: ... *nec coniugis umquam / praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni* ("and I never formally wed you nor did I endorse any contract as 'husband,'" Virg. A. 4.338–9).⁸ The narrating voice thus shows traces of a tendentious reading of Virgil's account from a Carthaginian viewpoint. It also seems to conjure up an Ovidian moment, drawing from both elegiac and epic poetry.⁹

Other sections of the iconographic program of the shield are likely meant to stir up Hannibal's warlike fury and enthusiasm more directly: think of the old Hamilcar, who is featured as a warrior still fighting; or the panel with Regulus' defeat and torture. In any case, the attempt of the Carthaginian general to subvert Rome's political as well as moral supremacy is based mainly on intergenerational hatred, which is traced back to a pre-Roman age: on such a premise, the Punic leader pretends to avenge Carthage's defeat in the previous war as well as the violated *fides* in a more general (if not objective) sense.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that, for the majority of the Carthaginians, the meaning of *fides* is completely at odds with that of the Romans. From the outset of the poem, we learn that, once upon a time, at the temple of Dido, a younger Hamilcar had instructed his son: *gens recidiva Phrygum Cadmeae stirpis alumnos / foederibus non aequa premit* ("the restored race of Phrygians is oppressing with unjust treaties the people of Cadmean stock," Sil. 1.106–7).¹⁰ These words provide a sort of *ex post* political generalization of the last prayer addressed with desperate confidence by Dido to a divine power who cares for unrequited lovers: ... *tum, si quod non aequo foedere amantis / curae numen habet iustumque memorque, precatur* ("she prays to a power that is just (if there is one), a power that remembers, whose jurisdiction embraces all lovers with one-sided contracts," Virg. A. 4.520–1).¹¹ Within this context, the oath sworn by the child Hannibal at the temple of his ancestress seems a true confirmation, and stands out as a new important step in the development, of an anti-Roman idea of *fides*: the champion of the African *gens Cadmea*, whose treachery is to become proverbial,¹² will soon show absolute loyalty to the memory of his ancestors and, as their ultimate avenger, will strenuously undertake the inherited mission.¹³

The Conquest of Saguntum and *Imitatio Herculis*: Hannibal as the Defender of "True" *Fides*

Hannibal's "Barcid" *fides* inevitably triggers the systematic destruction of all that is identified as the Roman *sacrata fides* (1.634): he starts with the violation of treaties and continues with the siege of Saguntum, "the famous home of loyalty" (*domus inclita fidei*, 1.598).¹⁴ We should not forget that, in Hannibal's distorted view, the siege and ensuing devastation of the city devoted to Hercules and (Roman) *Fides* represents an act of vengeance directed at the winners of the First Punic War as well as a tribute of *pietas* addressed to Carthage and its founder, Dido. Indeed, the conquest of Saguntum ultimately stands out as a feigned paradoxical way to punish the treachery of (the proto-Roman) Aeneas: it therefore represents a victory dedicated, so to speak, to *fides* itself.

When dealing with Murrus, perhaps the most representative of Saguntum's "synecdochic heroes,"¹⁵ Hannibal explicitly aims to embody the offended party and shows that might and right are both on his side. The Carthaginian claims to leave the treaties (*foedera*, 1.479) to his enemy to observe, as well as loyalty and obedience to law, inasmuch as they enact the Roman oppression here symbolized by Saguntum (*fer tecum castamque fidem servataque iura*, "take with you Loyalty unstained and observance of law," 1.481). As regards himself, Hannibal proudly asks for the "deceived

gods" to be his partners (*deceptos mihi linque deos*, "leave to me the deceived gods," 1.482). According to the most common interpretation of this passage, Hannibal is here referring to the gods deceived by his own deliberate violation of the pacts.¹⁶ Yet I do not think that we are dealing here with a further mere occurrence of the "Carthaginian *perfidia*" theme. On the contrary, Hannibal seems to bitterly criticize the way the Saguntines and the Romans pretend to be the only reliable representatives and interpreters of loyalty. Expressions like *casta fides* and *servata iura* have an ironic undertone, in a parody of the language of Roman diplomacy. While downplaying the effective role of the gods in the action, Hannibal is not really boasting that *he* has deceived them: perhaps he is polemically hinting that the gods have been "deceived" earlier by the unjust cosmic order that Rome seeks to impose and he would like to challenge.

Thus, among the *decepti*, we may include Hercules himself, the protector of Saguntum, whose favour Hannibal is seeking and who is the target of his tendentious *imitatio*. At 1.509–14, Hannibal asks Murrus to consider whether the Tiryntian hero will not far more justly (*iustus*, 510) assist the Carthaginians, and then he invokes Hercules' protection upon himself: "Bring your power to help me, invincible Alcides; and, as you are renowned for the destruction of Troy long ago, so support me when I destroy the scions of the Phrygian race" (*fer numen amicum / et, Troiae quondam primis memorate ruinis, / dexter ades Phrygiae delenti stirpis alumnus*, 1.512–14).¹⁷ Hannibal alludes here to the deception of Hercules by the Trojan king Laomedon, after saving Hesione from a sea-monster. Hercules' deceiver was then an ancestor of the Romans, and certainly not the most honourable one. To take his revenge, the hero besieged the city, destroying the Trojan walls for the first time. It is worth noting that the connection Silius' Hannibal forges between Saguntum (the city-symbol of *fides*) and Laomedon's Troy (conquered by Hercules, the hero of *fides*) is paradoxically based on the violation of *fides*, by Troy and, indirectly – as ally of the *alumni Phrygiae stirpis* – by Saguntum (in the name of Rome). On this assumption, Hannibal claims to be the avenger of the violated (Carthaginian) *fides*, almost to the point of fashioning himself as its new guarantor.¹⁸

The (Roman) Goddess *Fides* at Saguntum

Fides was also a goddess in ancient Rome and received a place within the Roman pantheon. A temple, built around the middle of the third century BC, was dedicated to *Fides Publica populi Romani*, whose worship is said to have been introduced by Numa, in the southeast area of the Capitoline hill. To be sure, the appearances of Fides as a literary character are less common

in comparison with other divine personifications, such as *Virtus*. However, the special taste displayed by Flavian epic for supernatural moral entities gives *Fides* the opportunity to take the stage, too. In particular, the *Punica* have been duly considered as an epic of *Fides*, since "in keinen Epos nimmt *Fides* als Gestalt und als Daseinmacht eine so beherrschende Stellung ein."¹⁹ Silius' poem hosts two epiphanies of *Fides* the goddess: the longer one is in Book 2 and the other in Book 13, which respectively highlight the exemplarity of Saguntum's sacrifice and Capua's just punishment for its treachery.²⁰ Both epiphanies are addressed mainly to the peoples of the besieged cities, and in neither of them does Hannibal play a direct role.

As for the first appearance, which takes place on the eve of the fall of Saguntum, I wish to briefly comment on its "dramatic" context.²¹ The narrator creates a sequence of two reciprocally opposite divine interventions, that of *Fides* and, immediately after, that of her antagonist, *Tisiphone*. At first, persuaded by *Hercules'* plea, *Fides* comes down from heaven and instills both warlike fury and courage into the hearts of the Saguntines. However, the goddess clearly intends to prevent them from losing their humanity (*sed prohibet culpa pollutam extendere lucem / casta Fides paribusque famem compescere membris*, "Loyalty forbids them to prolong a life defiled by crime, and to stay their hunger with the flesh of fellow-creatures," 2.524–5). The intervention of *Tisiphone*, whose rage is triggered by *Juno*, immediately ensues. The infernal demon turns the Saguntines' fierce resistance into absolute despair, leading them to internecine carnage. This marks the end of the siege and the ultimate fall of Saguntum. In my opinion, such an indirect duel between these two divine entities, which strongly resembles the confrontation between *Tisiphone* herself and *Pietas* in Statius' *Thebaid* (11.457–96),²² is also a way to signal powerfully the final victory of the anti-*fides* (the perverted *fides* that comes from hell and is embodied on earth by Hannibal) over the real and "positive" *fides*, represented by the Saguntines.²³

This tragic outcome is also further complicated by the appearance(s) of *Tiburna*, *Murrus'* widow. In fact, when the character first enters the narrative, we are not confronted with the real *Tiburna*. It is *Tisiphone*, who, after taking *Tiburna's* shape (2.553–9), incites the Saguntines to rebel against *fides* and escape slavery by killing each other (*sat Fidei proavisque datum ...*, "we have done enough for the sake of Loyalty and our forefathers," 2.561).²⁴ The real *Tiburna* appears one hundred lines later, when she commits suicide with her husband's sword, while invoking his name:

ecce inter medios caedum *Tiburna* furores
fulgenti dextram mucrone armata mariti
et laeva infelix ardentem lampada quassans

squalentemque erecta comam ac liventia planctu
 pectora nudatis ostendens saeva lacertis
 ad tumulum Murri super ipsa cadavera fertur ...
 tunc rapiens letum "tibi ego haec" ait "optime coniunx,
 ad manes, en, ipsa fero." sic ense recepto
 arma super ruit et flammas invadit hiatu. (Sil. 2.665–70, 678–80)

Lo! in the midst of madness and murder, unhappy Tiburna was seen. Her right hand was armed with her husband's bright sword, and in her left she brandished a burning torch; her disordered hair stood on end, her shoulders were bare, and she displayed a breast discoloured by cruel blows. She hurried right over the corpses to the tomb of Murrus ... Then, rushing upon death, "Best of husbands," she cried, "see, I myself carry this weapon to you in the shades." And so she stabbed herself and fell down over the armour, meeting the fire with open mouth.

This image provides the graphic representation of *fides* surrendering to hostile fate. At the same time, Tiburna's gesture, embodying a highly tragic demonstration of conjugal loyalty, offers an exemplary reversal of the last scene of Dido's suicide by means of Aeneas' sword: that is the foundation myth of the Carthaginian hatred for Rome and also of Hannibal's perverted *fides*. Moreover, Silius' rewriting of the famous Virgilian episode, which indirectly integrates and dramatizes the "static" evocation of the ekphrasis of Dido's temple in *Punica* Book 1 (90–1: the queen sitting, with Aeneas' sword at her feet), invites us to consider whether Tiburna herself (rather than Tisiphone) was the actual protagonist of the previous scene.²⁵

The Quarrel over Hannibal at Carthage and the Defeat of "Positive" *Fides*

The opposition between the two different notions of *fides* has been already thematized in the second book (270–390) on the occasion of the debate in the Carthaginian senate. The Roman envoys led by Fabius require that Carthage state clearly whether it intends to side with Hannibal or stand against his aggressive manoeuvres in Spain. Such a choice inevitably has consequences for the meaning of the word *fides*. The assembly splits into two camps: those who still believe in loyalty and recognize as valid the peace treaty signed after the First Punic War (*movet hinc foedusque fidesque ...*, 2.273) and those who share the people's love for the ambitious young leader (*hinc popularis amor coeptantis magna iuventae*, 2.275). Hanno, the first orator (2.279–326) as well as member of the elite opposing the Barcid party, condemns the breaking of *foedera* and the violation of peace (2.293–7): in

so doing, he also conjures up indirectly the (Roman) view of *fides* as a legal, positive notion based on mutual trust and deriving from ancient "international" laws. However, this speech sheds an ambiguous light on the character himself, especially if we remember how he has been introduced by the narrator (*ductorem infestans odiis gentilibus Hannon*, "Hanno, hereditary foe and constant assailant of the leader," 2.277). Despite the appearances, Hanno is not genuinely a supporter of right and justice among the Carthaginians: he seems to be instead motivated by a strong sense of hereditary hatred for Hannibal. Therefore, Hanno employs crude metaphorical language to define his personal enemy, calling him *exitiale caput* (ruinous man," 2.287), *ingenitum virus* ("venomous scion," 288), *novi caecus caligine regni* ("blinded and dazzled by new-gained power," 299): such expressions convey envy and personal animosity, which inevitably affect the objectivity of Hanno's arguments and expose him to delegitimization, despite his rhetorical skills.²⁶ Once Hanno's arguments are finally refuted, readers are left with the impression that, even when a Carthaginian takes sides with *fides*, this does not really imply authentic interest in moral justice and faithfulness.

This private hostility crops up on several occasions throughout the poem, as, for example, in 4.771: *discors antiquitus* ("the ancient enemy"); 8.22–4: ... *laevus conatibus Hannon / ductoris non ulla domo summittere patres / auxilia aut ullis opibus iuisse sinebat* ("... the opposition of Hanno to the enterprise did not suffer their senate to send reinforcements or supplies of any kind"); and 11.543–4: ... *quem* (scil. *Hannonem*) *gliscens gloria pravum / ductoris studio iamdudum agitabat acerbo* ("Hanno, whose crooked mind had long been tortured by the growing fame of Hannibal"). Thus, while pretending to be the (isolated) voice of positive *fides* at Carthage, Hanno ends up looking like an ineffective (if not unreliable) character, a Don Quixote of sorts, in the fashion of the Homeric Thersites or the Virgilian Drances.

However, Hanno does not directly challenge his great rival in a face-to-face debate, like those engaged by Thersites with Odysseus in the *Iliad* or by Drances with Turnus in the *Aeneid*. Hanno's opponent, Gestar, is another secondary character and nothing but a product of poetic invention – a strenuous partisan of Hannibal, who embodies the role of the demagogue and antagonist of positive *fides*. Silius needs him to rework another ancient sub-scheme of the epic oratory duel, in which two speakers quarrel over a third "major" figure, who is physically absent.²⁷ As the mouthpiece of the Barcas (2.330–74), Gestar aims (and eventually manages) literally to infect the senate with popular, enthusiastic confidence in Hannibal, whose courage gives Carthage the possibility of changing the war's outcome. According to his viewpoint, Hanno and his friends are Carthage's very enemies

(*Ausonius miles*, "Roman soldiers," 2.331). Gestar wants to demonstrate that it is possible to defeat the Romans, and, for that purpose, he singles out Regulus' example as the most evident proof of Hanno's ill faith (2.340–4).²⁸ The heroic self-sacrifice to *fides* of the Roman martyr is tendentiously misused in order to prove Carthage's good reasons: thereafter, the image of Regulus' torture on the shield of Hannibal provides a significant repetition of such propaganda (*pendet sub imagine poenae / Regulus et fidei dat magna exempla Sagunto*, "hung Regulus, beneath a picture of his punishment, setting to Saguntum a noble example of loyalty," 2.435–6).²⁹ Gestar's final call to defend *libertas* and *fides erga patriam* by keeping *fides* toward Hannibal is meant to refute the notion of *fides* as enslavement: this is the decisive argument that persuades the Carthaginian senators to follow Hannibal's cause.

Family-Centred *Fides* and Imperialistic Ideology

Victory in war and the enemy's annihilation become Hannibal's best means to display *fides* and devotion, as well as the necessary premise of Carthage's imperialistic expansion. The issue is indirectly confirmed by the words addressed to Scipio by the ghost of Hamilcar, Hannibal's father, in the *Nekyia* of Book 13. When answering Scipio's reproach against the proverbial *Punica fides* (*taliane, o fraudum genitor, sunt foedera vobis?*, "Is this the way, o father of lies, that Carthage keeps her treaties?" 13.738), Hamilcar proudly comments on Hannibal's victories in Italy as the best evidence of his *pietas erga parentem* and *erga deos*:

... licitum nec fallere divos
iuratos patri. quod si Laurentia vastat
nunc igni regna et Phrygias res vertere temptat,
o pietas, o sancta fides, o vera propago! (Sil. 13.746–9)

He may not deceive the gods by whom his father swore. But if he is now laying Italy waste with fire and striving to destroy her power, then I hail him as my true son, dutiful to me and faithful to his oath!

Hamilcar's eulogy of Hannibal's *pietas* and (anti-)*fides* has been compared with Anchises' words to Aeneas in the Underworld (*heu pietas ... heu fides*, Virg. *A.* 6.878). This similarity relies on a paradoxical circumstance, which highlights the polemical character of the allusion: Hamilcar is celebrating his son's virtue before Scipio, Hannibal's most dangerous enemy and, ironically, the leader who will succeed in defeating him. Strikingly, the

Aeneas-Anchises scene becomes intertwined with another model from the Virgilian *katabasis*, the encounter between the (living) Aeneas and Dido, although Dido's silent recrimination is replaced by Hamilcar's bitter answer in Silius.³⁰

Hannibal's perverted *fides* has further consequences, affecting every aspect of his public and private image. An eloquent example comes from the two episodes involving his wife, Imilce.³¹ The first (3.61–157) narrates the last encounter between husband and wife, in the presence of their baby son, who was born during the siege of Saguntum (*pignus belli*, "pledge of war," 3.80). The farewell scene, which takes place just before the Carthaginian army sets out to Italy, is a pathological (not simply pathetic) intensification of the episode in *Iliad* 6 with Hector, Andromache, and Astyanax, but at the same time it seems oriented at exploring the concept of *fides* in all its various aspects. From the outset, the text highlights the strong conjugal bond between the two (*memori ... amore*, "love full of memories," 3.65): its principal aim is apparently the perpetuation of the family mission – that is, the fight against Rome. This seems confirmed by the fact that Hannibal's initial words are formally addressed to his baby son. The infant, endowed with the father's fierce look, has to be preserved, especially because he will take on Hannibal's role: soon he will repeat his father's oath and learn how to violate pacts and international laws.³²

On the other hand, Imilce, whose *fides* is explicitly celebrated by her husband (*veneranda fide* and *fidissima coniunx*, 3.88 and 133), complains that Hannibal no longer allows her to follow him in war and perceives his decision as a loss of confidence in her and in their mutual relationship (*sic foedera nota ... ?*, "do you forget our nuptial union?", 3.110).³³ Imilce is desperately trying to prevent Hannibal from paying the consequences for his own warlike fury, but the way she displays her fear also leaves room for other suggestions. Imilce feels and acts like someone who is forsaken (*atque acies inter flagrantiaque arma relictæ / coniugis et nati curam servare memento*, "and amid the battles and the blaze of arms, remember to keep in mind the wife whom you leave behind, and the child," 3.117–18). So, when thinking of Hannibal's relentless bravery and formidable obstinacy in pursuing his aim (and his imperialistic dreams), she also seems worried about his possible "unfaithfulness" to their conjugal bond in the future. Hannibal does not at all manage to calm her fear when, a few lines later (139–41), he tells her about his nocturnal visions of Hamilcar and other nightmares.³⁴

Imilce's troubles increase soon after her return to Carthage. Indeed, her second narrative appearance opens with perturbing news: her child has been singled out for ritual sacrifice (*molk*) to the Punic gods, and this circumstance provides Hannibal's internal enemies with a good opportunity

to strike him down by taking advantage of the *raison d'état* (4.763–829). Thus, Imilce, who is apparently alone and without support, has to deal with a double threat. On the one hand, she has to contend with the lack of *fides* in Hannibal's ungrateful homeland (... *sic praemia reddit / Carthago et tales iam nunc tibi solvit honores*, "such is the reward you get from Carthage, and such the honours she pays you now!" 4.789–90). On the other, she fears her own husband's unyielding heart (*immitia corda mariti*, 4.807). Imilce is afraid that Hannibal, completely absorbed by his war mission abroad, might even accept his son's sacrifice in view of the final success of his enterprise.

Indeed, it is certainly not because of Imilce's "philosophical" tirade against the Carthaginian barbaric rites that Hannibal decides to oppose the sacrifice and not to act as a new Agamemnon. Nor are we ever told about his own paternal feelings: his very goal is "to perpetuate his own ancestral legacy in his own son."³⁵ His answer to the Carthaginian envoys displays egotistical self-confidence more than sincere devotion to his homeland: *quid tibi pro tanto non impar munere solvat / Hannibal aequatus superis? quae praemia digna / inveniam* ("O mother Carthage, you have set me on a level with the gods, and how shall I repay you in full for such generosity? What sufficient recompense can I find?" 4.809–11). This is a further example of Hannibal's perversion of *fides*.

Hannibal thus embodies a perfect mix of political ambition and diplomatic self-restraint. By promising Roman blood and slaughter as a tribute to his national gods (*paro sacra et maiores molior aras*, "I am preparing a sacrifice and building for you mightier altars," 4.822), he apparently manages to persuade his fellow citizens to spare the child, who, as Hannibal's heir in the war (*at puer armorum belli servabitur heres*, 4.814), already receives the first symbolic exhortation from the father (*perge ... nostroque incumbere labori*, "go forward and apply yourself to my task," 4.818). As Antony Augoustakis rightly puts it, we cannot say that Imilce actually succeeds "in promoting a pure Roman ideological code of *pietas* and *fides* among the Carthaginians":³⁶ unlike the ancestral hatred against Rome, *fides* (even conjugal *fides*) cannot but remain a private value in Carthage.

Hannibal's Decline and the Transformation of *Fides*

Let us now see how the relationship between Hannibal and *fides* evolves throughout his military campaign abroad. In Italy, the Punic leader actually undergoes a gradual but noticeable transformation, which also affects the way he remains faithful to his mission – that is, how he preserves his version of Carthaginian *fides*. At Cannae, after a brief emblematic *synkrisis* with his future foe, Scipio (*melior pietate fideque*, 9.437),³⁷ Hannibal

obtains his greatest victory. Soon after, however, fortune begins to fade, and an interestingly peculiar splitting of his personality seems to take place, which directly involves the relationship with two important literary influences, Caesar and Pompey, the two main protagonists of Lucan's poem. Perfectly matching his antagonistic role, Hannibal still looks like a titanic, demonic Caesar, even after his last defeat at Zama, when we are told that his hatred for Rome and Jupiter would have lasted beyond the end of the war.³⁸ Nonetheless, from Cannae onwards, different sorts of negative factors accumulate: adversities of "moral" nature, such as the attack of Venus' army at Capua (11.410–26) or the signs of envious hostility repeatedly coming from Carthage (e.g., 8.22–4, 11.555–600, 16.11–14),³⁹ together with the series of military setbacks culminating with Hasdrubal's defeat at the Metaurus River (15.626–808), not to mention Hannibal's own failed attempt to attack the walls of Rome (12.605–752 and 13.1–93). All these unlucky events instil into the Carthaginian leader a growing awareness of the approaching catastrophe and a consequent sense of failure that, mostly in the last two books, tend to make him similar to Lucan's Pompey.⁴⁰

Such identification goes beyond the mere idea of defeat and decline, for it also involves *fides*. In particular, the whole narrative section that leads to Hannibal's departure from Italy shares with Pompey's farewell the character of an authentic divorce (*discidium*) from his own homeland.⁴¹ Unlike Pompey, however, Hannibal never actually stops fighting against fate, which forces him to abandon Italy. An earlier dramatization of his resistance is realized in the account of an upsetting nocturnal vision, when Hannibal saw himself attacked by the shades of the dead Roman consuls, drawing their swords and forcing him to take flight: he tried to resist and "clutched the soil of Italy with both arms" (*ulnis amplexus utrisque / haerebat Latiae*, 17.167–8). Such a defiant attitude provides a "physical" intensification of other analogous scenes of pathetic reactions to forced separation, like that of his wife, Imilce: ... *abripitur divulsa marito. / haerent intenti vultus et litora servant* ("torn from her husband's arms, she is carried away. Her eager eyes still cling to him and watch the shore," 3.154–5). But above all, Hannibal's instinctive gesture reminds us of Imilce's main literary model in this specific circumstance: Cornelia's sad farewell to Pompey before leaving Epiros for Lesbos, where she should wait for the war's outcome:

labitur infelix manibusque excepta suorum
fertur ad aequoreas, ac se prosternit, harenas,
litoraue ipsa tenet, tandemque inlata carinaest.
non sic infelix patriam portusque reliquit
Hesperios, saevi premerent cum Caesaris arma.

(Luc. 5.799–803)

She falls fainting in her wretchedness, and, received in the hands of her attendants, is carried down to the sands of the sea, and there prostrates herself, and clings to the very shore and at length is borne to the ship. Not thus unhappy did she leave her country and the Hesperian harbours, when the arms of ruthless Caesar were pressing.

Like that of Imilce, the image of Hannibal himself clutching the soil of Italy, while desperately attempting to delay departure, draws upon the gesture (endowed with elegiac connotations) of Lucan's heroine, who tries to resist the inevitable *discidium*. The analogy with Cornelia, therefore, provides further confirmation for Alison Keith's definition of the Carthaginian as a "female-focused hero."⁴² Cornelia and Imilce vindicate the right to display *fides* toward their husbands by trying (vainly) to maintain their roles as wives beside them. They protest against the impositions of (male) "rationality" represented by power and politics and characterized by a dismissal of the conjugal rights of love and fidelity. Hannibal's dream re-enacts, so to speak, the characters of Imilce and Cornelia as living examples of "resistant *fides*," shedding light on the psychological condition of the Punic leader, torn between two kinds of *fides*: loyalty to Carthage and his veritable "attachment" to Italy, perceived as a sort of promised land.

Thereafter, while listening to the messengers who convey Carthage's call for help, Hannibal silently considers whether his commitment to his native country is really worth renouncing Italy (17.184–6). Then, he decides to return to Africa, though not without bitter recriminations: *nunc patriae decus et patriae nunc Hannibal unus / subsidium, nunc in nostra spes ultima dextra* ("Hannibal is now the glory of his country, now her only rock of refuge; now her one remaining hope is in my right arm," 17.197–8). Finally, Hannibal gives proof of *fides* (and *pietas*) *erga patriam*, without any regard for his own blessed pride: *vertentur signa, ut patres statuere, simulque / et patriae muros et te servabimus, Hannon* ("I shall march away, as the senate has decreed; I shall save the walls of Carthage and you, Hannon, at the same time," 17.200–1).

However, at the very moment of his departure from Italy, Hannibal looks again as if he were leaving what he perceives almost as an adoptive homeland and no longer the foreign country he was unable to conquer. While keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the Italian coast, he suffers the pains of an *exul*.⁴³ Yet, almost immediately after leaving the shore, Hannibal makes a further attempt to rebel against the gods' power. Even in this "Caesarian" moment,⁴⁴ traces of Pompeian melancholy and nostalgia continue to filter through the character's words:

... mentisne ego compos et hoc nunc
indignus reditu, qui memet finibus umquam

amorim Ausoniae? flagrasset subdita taedis
Carthago, et potius cecidisset nomen Elissae.

(Sil. 17.221–4)

Am I mad? Do not I deserve to return thus, as a punishment for ever leaving Ausonia?
Better that Carthage had been burned with fire, and the name of Elissa been blotted
out forever!

The couple formed at line 223 by the hapax *amorim* (syncopated form for the perfect subjunctive *amoverim*) and *Ausoniae* (genitive depending on *finibus*) curiously resonates with a passage of the account of Pompey's second dream, at the beginning of the seventh book of the *Bellum Civile*:

o felix, si te vel sic tua Roma videret!
donassent utinam superi patriaeque tibique
unum, Magne, diem, quo fati certus uterque
extremum tanti fructum raperetis amoris.
tu velut Ausonia vadis moriturus in urbe,
illa rati semper de te sibi conscia voti
hoc scelus haud umquam fatis haerere putavit,
sic se dilecti tumulum quoque perdere Magni.

(Luc. 7.29–36)

Oh, fortunate, if the Rome you loved had seen you even in a dream. One day at least the gods should have granted to you and to your country, on which each, with full knowledge of the future, might have snatched the last enjoyment of your great love for one another. You go forth, believing that you will die in the Ausonian city; and Rome, knowing that her prayers for you had always been answered, refused to believe that this horror was written in the book of destiny – that she should thus lose even the grave of her beloved Magnus.

Conclusion: Problematizing *Fides*

To sum up, despite the fundamental validity of the opposition between Roman loyalty and Carthaginian disloyalty, the concept of *fides* and its interpretation are richly problematized in the *Punica*, often because of its peculiar manifestations and outcomes. The case of Hannibal, as this chapter has tried to show, is particularly suggestive of such complexity. The Carthaginian leader embodies the anti-hero of *fides*, or rather the hero of an anti-*fides*, because he displays with outstanding strength a perverted notion of *fides*, which consists of absolute loyalty to a hereditary hatred against Rome and rests on the assumption that family and state actually overlap. The heroic self-sacrifice of a martyr to Roman *fides*, Atilius Regulus, seems at odds with this assumption. However, this also invites us to consider the high cost of loyalty in terms of familiar

affections, as we can infer from the paradoxical charge hurled at Regulus himself by his own wife on the day he leaves Rome forever:

“... data foedera nobis
ac promissa fides thalamis ubi, perfide, nunc est?”
ultima vox duras haec tunc penetravit ad auris,
cetera percussi vetuerunt noscere remi. (Sil. 6.517–20)

“Where is now the compact made with me, and the troth you plighted at our marriage, unfaithful husband (*perfide*)?” These were the last words which reached the inflexible ear of Regulus; the rest was drawn by the plashing of the oars.

As we have seen, these words echo Dido’s reproach to Aeneas as *perfidus* (Virg. A. 4.305 and 366).⁴⁵ At the same time, they also intensify Imilce’s manifestation of fear with regard to Hannibal’s excessive *fides* in his own enterprise.

Therefore, we can say that the nature of *fides* is by no means reassuring or unproblematic. That also emerges from the two prophecies of the Cumaean Sibyl, which frame the *Nekyia* episode: the exits of Scipio and Hannibal from the sight of history. At the outset of his *katabasis*, Scipio is briefly informed about his own future: he will soon become the leader of the Roman army and manage to defeat Hannibal; not long after that, however, his fellow citizens will force him into exile:

“... pudet urbis iniquae
quod post haec decus hoc patriaue domoque carebit.”
sic vates gressumque lacus vertebat ad atros.
tum iuvenis “quaecumque datur sors durior aevi
obnitemur,” ait, “culpa modo pectora cessent.” (Sil. 13.514–18)

“Shame on the unjust citizens, who will deprive of home and country a hero who has done such things!” Thus spoke the prophetess and was turning her steps to the dark pools of Hades. Then Scipio said: “However hard the lot in life assigned me, I shall struggle to overcome it; the consciousness of innocence is all I ask.”

This inglorious page of Roman history, as defined by the Sibyl, proves that *fides* could be offended even in her very “home,” Rome. However, at the end of the *Nekyia*, Scipio receives reassuring news from the priestess herself. Hannibal will manage to flee from the camp at Zama and will be missing from the parade of Scipio’s triumph (17.643–4), but this ultimate foe of Rome and (Roman) *fides* will die alone in exile, away from his homeland and all his relatives. Here Silius reminds us of what has already been anticipated

at the end of the first pair of books, in the obituary of Saguntum, the city of Hercules and Fides (2.696–707).⁴⁶ However, more importantly, this early anticipation of Hannibal's final destiny must sound like a powerful warning to the whole world not to neglect the importance of *fides*: *audite, o gentes, neu rumpite foedera pacis / nec regnis postferte fidem!* ("Hear it, ye nations, and break not treaties of peace nor set power above loyalty!" 2.700–1). Thus, it comes as no surprise that in, the Sibyl's last words to Scipio (13.868–93), Carthage's final defeat and, above all, Hannibal's just punishment are the actual consequences of a victory of *fides*:

"ne metue": exclamat vates "non vita sequetur
inviolata virum: patria non ossa quiescent.
namque ubi fractus opum magnae certamine pugnae
pertulerit vinci turpemque orare salutem,
rursus bella volet Macetum instaurare sub armis.
damnatusque doli desertis coniuge fida⁴⁷
et dulci nato linquet Carthaginis arces
atque una profugus lustrabit caerulea puppe." (Sil. 13.874–81)

"Fear not," cried the priestess: "no life of untroubled prosperity shall be his; his bones shall not rest in his native land. For all his strength will be broken in a great battle; he will suffer defeat and stoop to beg for his life; and then he will try to wage a fresh war with the armies of Macedon. Condemned as a traitor, he will leave his faithful wife and darling son behind him, abandon Carthage and flee across the sea with a single ship."

Such images, with their didactic colour, enhance the interpretation of the historical events as fundamentally ruled by ethics and will legitimize Rome as the superior of the two contenders.

NOTES

- 1 The fundamental role of *fides* in Silius' *Punica* has long been recognized; see, e.g., Albrecht 1964: 55–86 and Hartmann 2004.
- 2 Otto 1890: 291; Sall. *Iug.* 108.3; Liv. 30.30.27; see also Pl. *Poen.* 113. On the Roman tradition of Carthaginian perfidy, see Marks in this volume.
- 3 Bernstein 2008: 135–9.
- 4 For *fidei* as a defining genitive, see OLD s.v. *sinister* 5b; Duff 1934 translates as "faithless to his plighted word," which corresponds to *perfidus*: see Ernout-Meillet 1985 s.v. *perfidus* ("per- peut marquer la déviation") and s.v. *per*. On this passage, see also Marks in this volume. Silius' quotations follow Delz 1987;

translations of Silius are taken from Duff 1934 (occasionally slightly modified) and of Virgil's *Aeneid* from Ahl 2007.

- 5 Virg. A. 4.622–4: *tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum / exercete odiis cinerique haec mittite nostro / munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunt* (“Tyrians, drive with relentless hate against his [sc. *Aeneas*] stock and every / future brood, and dispatch them as ritual gifts to my ashes. / No love must ever exist between our two peoples, no treaties”).
- 6 Virg. A. 4.625–7: *exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor / qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos, / nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires* (“Rise from my bones, my avenger – and there will be an avenger! – / so you can hound these Dardan settlers with hot fire and cold steel, / now, or some day in the future, whenever the strength coalesces”); see Horsfall 1990: 127–44.
- 7 See Vessey 1975; Fucecchi 2003: 274–80; Stocks 2014: 88–91; and Bernstein 2017: xxviii–xxix and 187–207 (with bibliography).
- 8 For a brief moment, the narrating voice assumes (though probably does not endorse) the Carthaginian viewpoint and offers almost an echo of Dido’s words against Aeneas’ unfaithfulness. Something similar seems to happen when the narrator is talking about Hanno, Hannibal’s personal enemy in the Carthaginian senate (see below).
- 9 Ov. Ep. 7.9: *certus es, Aeneas, cum foedere solvere naves?* (“Are you determined, Aeneas, to release your ships, together with the nuptial promise?”); Trist. 2.536: *non legitimo foedere iunctus amor* (“the union of illicit love”); Met. 14.79 (Dido): *non bene discidium Phrygii latura mariti* (“she, who was fated not to endure her Phrygian husband’s departure”).
- 10 The swearing of the oath in a temple dedicated to Dido is a Silian invention, which is not to be found in other sources. As a result, Dido becomes a goddess of revenge herself, like Nemesis.
- 11 Hamilcar’s words may also allude to another passage from Dido’s curse against Aeneas (... *nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae / tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur, / sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena*, “when he surrenders himself to an unjust peace and its strict terms, / grant him no joy in his realm or the light he so loves. / let him lie dead, well before his due day, halfway up a beach and unburied,” Virg. A. 4.618–20).
- 12 E.g., Sil. 1.5: *sacri perfida pacti / gens Cadmea* (“the people of Cadmus who violated the sacred bond”) and 1.8–10: *ter ... iuratum ... Iovi foedus ... Sidonii fregere duces* (“three times the Sidonian leaders broke the oath sworn to Jupiter”). From a Roman viewpoint, Hannibal looks as if he were the very champion of *perfidia*: cf. Liv. 21.4.9: *perfidia plus quam Punica* (“a perfidy more than Punic”); Hor. Carm. 4.4.49: *perfidus Hannibal* (“perfidious Hannibal”).
- 13 For the opposition between public and private *fides* in Carthage, see Devallet 1992: 96 and Stocks 2014: 86n22.

- 14 Sil. 1.61–2: ... *avet Aegates abolere ... / ... ac Siculo demergere foedera ponto* ("longed to blot out the Aegades ... and to drown the treaty of peace in the Sicilian sea"); 1.268: *rumpere foedera certus* ("resolved, as he was, to break the treaty"). As for the siege of Saguntum, see Marks (this volume), who, however, concentrates mostly on two scenes from *Punica* Book 1: Hannibal's declaration of war and Jupiter's final "response."
- 15 To use Hardie's 1993 terminology, Murrus is identified with the city walls: in this sense, he could be considered the Saguntine counterpart of Hector, the most important defender of the Trojan walls, whose tragic end he also re-enacts; see Stocks 2014: 108–12, who also stresses the correspondence with Hector and the Virgilian Turnus.
- 16 Duff translates the phrase as "the gods that I have deceived."
- 17 See Stocks 2014: 218–19.
- 18 For a persuasive assessment of this matter, see Stocks 2014: 16–18.
- 19 Albrecht 1964: 55.
- 20 See Marks in this volume.
- 21 In Val. Max. 6.6.ext.1, the personified *Fides* is already represented as feeling sorrow at the tragic destiny of the Saguntines.
- 22 Walter 2013 offers the most recent exploration of this similarity.
- 23 Such an imminent substitution is proudly announced by Hannibal himself at the outset of the siege: the Saguntines have to learn that "their treaties and Italy would be far away now, because they are besieged" (... *longe clausis sua foedera, longe / Ausoniam fore*, 1.301–2) and that "decrees of the senate, law and justice, loyalty and the gods are all in his own hand now" (*scita patrum et leges et iura fidemque deosque / in dextra nunc esse sua*, 1.303–4). On Saguntum and *Fides* in Silius, see Albrecht 1964: 55–86, Vessey 1974, and Pomeroy 2010.
- 24 Tisiphone disguised as Tiburna pretends to have been inspired by Murrus' shade. The result is a paradoxical subversion of the epiphany of Hector to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 2. Like Troy, Saguntum too is doomed to be completely destroyed. However, on this occasion nobody will survive, since the ghost of Murrus will make his wife lead the entire population to suicide (*fuge ... / ad manes, Tiburna, meos*, 2.565–6). In this sense, Murrus plays the same role as the shade of Sychaeus, Dido's husband, who called his beloved wife to the Underworld (*hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis / visa viri*, "she thought she could hear both the voice and the words of her husband calling," Virg. *A.* 4.460–1).
- 25 However, Tiburna kills herself with the sword of her beloved husband, Murrus, not (like Dido) with that of a foreign lover, and, in so doing, she seems to follow Tisiphone's macabre invitation (see note 24 above).
- 26 Cf., in particular, the image of Carthage "besieged" by Hannibal, who is depicted almost as a new Coriolanus (... *nunc hoc, hoc inquam, tempore muros /*

oppugnat, Carthago, tuos teque obsidet armis, “now, even now, he is attacking the walls of Carthage and besieging us with his army,” 2.302–3), as well as the final praise of the Roman soldiers, who “snatch the weapon from their wound and hurl it at the foe” (2.322–3). I discuss Silius’ Hanno as (peculiar and partial) recollection of Virgil’s Drances below. See also Bruère 1971: 30–1 and Bernstein 2017: 141.

- 27 Such a situation, where one of the two contenders takes sides with the absent (or even dead) hero, displaying his *fides* toward him, re-enacts the scheme of the contest for the hero’s legacy, as in the quarrel between Ajax and Ulysses over Achilles’ weapons. Another example of the pattern in Flavian epic is the dispute between Telamon and Meleager over Hercules in V. Fl. 3.637–716.
- 28 Note, in particular, how Gestar capitalizes on Hanno’s exploitation of the pathetic formula of autopsy (*vidi ego*) in order to switch from the tragic to the celebratory register: *vidi ego, cum* (scil. *Regulus*) *geminas artis post terga catenis / evinctus ... traheretur* (“I was looking on when Regulus with both hands fast behind his back ... was dragged along,” 2.340–1) and *vidi* (“I saw,” 2.343). Both passages polemically recall the finale of Hanno’s speech (*ipse ego ... vidi / vidi*, 2.322–3). On the formula *vidi ego* and its use in Roman tragedy and epic, see La Penna 1987 and 2003.
- 29 On ekphrasis and propaganda, see Fucecchi 2003 and Manuwald 2009.
- 30 Hamilcar’s answer to Scipio’s attack (*o fraudum genitor*) shows that the opposition between Rome and Carthage is also based on an irreconcilable difference in interpreting *fides* and its meaning; see Reitz 1982: 108 and Stocks 2014: 186n13.
- 31 On Imilce, see Augoustakis 2010: 196–213. For the characterization of Imilce’s heroism, Silius drew upon some recent historical examples, like the wife of Germanicus, Agrippina, who, according to Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.40), together with her baby son, followed her husband and shared the hard life of the military camp with him. It was only with much difficulty that Germanicus finally managed to send them both to Rome for the sake of safety, and this is precisely what happens in the *Punica*.
- 32 Sil. 3.84–6: “Then, when his riper age shall put on the down of youth, let him rush forth to war, treading the treaty under foot (*calcato foedere*); and let him, when victorious, demand a tomb for me upon the Capitoline hill.” On Hannibal’s child as the last scion of a dynasty who voted eternal hatred to Rome, see Bruère 1952; Fucecchi 1992; Bernstein 2008: 136–7; and Augoustakis 2010: 198–9.
- 33 See Rosati 1996: 145–50 and Newlands 2016: 159–60.
- 34 Almost like Tiburna, obsessed by Murrus’ voice, which announces the end of Saguntum and demands an extreme act of *fides* from his wife, Hannibal reveals that he is urged by his father’s ghost asking for an act of *pietas erga parentem* (see Marks in this volume). At the same time, from Imilce’s viewpoint,

Hamilcar's exhortation may also sound like a pretext (the image of Aeneas vainly trying to explain his reasons before Dido comes to mind).

- 35 Bernstein 2008: 137.
- 36 Augoustakis 2010: 196–7.
- 37 See Stocks 2014: 182–5 with bibliography.
- 38 Hannibal's last words (17.605–15) are to be compared to Caesar's when challenging the fury of the tempest on board Amyclas' little boat (Luc. 5.654–71); see Brouwers 1982: 83.
- 39 Cf. Nep. *Hann.* 1.2 and Liv. 28.12.9.
- 40 Fucecchi 1990b.
- 41 The growing pathos of Pompey's departure from Italy reaches its climax with the sequence – strongly marked by Virgilian influence – composed by the simile of the defeated bull (Luc. 2.601–9) and the farewell to the Italian coast (Luc. 3.1–7). In Silius' *Punica*, an analogous sequence is provided by the comparison between Hannibal and the bull (16.4–11) and the farewell to Italy (17.211–17).
- 42 Keith 2010: 372.
- 43 Sil. 17.213–17: *ductor defixos Itala tellure tenebat / intentus vultus, manantesque ora rigabant / per tacitum lacrimae, et suspiria crebra ciebat, / haud secus ac patriam pulsus dulcisque penatis / linqueret et tristis exul traheretur in oras*, "Hannibal kept his eyes steadily fixed on the Italian coast; the silent tears flowed down his cheeks, and again and again he sighed, like an exile driven to a dismal shore, who leaves behind his native land and the home he loves"; see Augoustakis 2010: 153 and n137, with bibliography. In contrast, according to Livy (33.48.2), Hannibal "is described as weeping more for his country's fate than his own" (Stocks 2014: 48).
- 44 Think of Caesar's way of fighting successfully against the sea storm in Lucan; see note 38 above.
- 45 See, extensively, Stocks in this volume.
- 46 Hannibal's "unjust victory" (*non aequa victoria*, 13.699) will be rewarded with exile and flight (*vagus exul in orbe / errabit toto*, 2.700–1), with the constant fear of being reached by his enemies and without the hope of finding loyalty anywhere.
- 47 The only person who is told to remain faithful to Hannibal is his wife, Imilce.

The Failure of Female *Fides* in the *Octavia*

LAUREN DONOVAN GINSBERG

The *Octavia* is a bedroom drama. Many of its major scenes take place within or just outside the empress' *thalamus* (bedroom). The plot as a whole revolves around Octavia's removal from the imperial bedroom and Pop-paea's insertion into that ideologically charged space as Nero's new wife and the soon-to-be mother of his heir.¹ Moreover, as the play unfolds and the audience is introduced to a variety of perspectives on the events of AD 62, we see that the empress' bedchamber is more than a space about which to spread Suetonian-style gossip. It is also a locus of political power in which the marital and political loyalties of Julio-Claudian women are repeatedly tested – and just as often found wanting. This chapter explores the concept of *fides* in the *Octavia*'s presentation of its imperial women, both in terms of the loyalty they do (or do not) bring to their imperial marriages and the ways in which they inspire conflicting loyalties in their subjects.²

I focus on the playwright's manipulation of elegiac conceits, especially the role of *fides* and its antonym *perfidia* in that genre.³ As Ruth Caston has demonstrated, Propertius in particular considers *fides* a core component of his elegiac world.⁴ It is the offering he makes to his beloved, the virtue he expects in return, and the stabilizing foundation upon which social bonds are built.⁵ More often than not, however, Propertius uses the language and imagery of *fides* to articulate a continuum of failures and betrayals, as the *perfidia* he experiences in his erotic relationship speaks to wider social concerns.⁶ Thus, within elegy, and especially Propertian elegy, *fides* becomes a lens through which we are invited to explore the world of conflicting loyalties and fractured ethics that takes us from the private bedroom of *amator* (lover) and *domina* (mistress) to the world of early imperial Rome.

It is this particular aspect of elegy and the elegiac relationship that informs the *Octavia's* representation of imperial women. Through its engagement with Propertius' poetry and broader elegiac themes, the play stages a world in which the marital *perfidia* of *dominae* (empresses) reflects a broader breakdown in the political structure of Julio-Claudian Rome. This argument rests less on intertextual analysis than on an examination of how the *Octavia* uses the building blocks of elegy to create a tragedy of imperial Rome. At times the *Octavia* will indeed engage with a specific passage from Propertius' poetry to a particular end, but more often the play borrows love poetry's repertoire of themes and stock characters to paint issues of loyalty and treachery in elegiac colours.⁷ Although the terminology of *fides* may not be omnipresent in every example I examine, the poetic heritage of *fides* as a constitutive ingredient in (Propertian) elegy's world-view underpins the play's representation of the marriages of the imperial family. In reimagining and dramatizing Rome's notorious Julio-Claudian women, the playwright puts conflicts of erotic and political loyalty at the centre of his *domus Augusta* (house of Augustus) as he puts a new version of the elegiac *domina* at the centre of imperial power.

Models of Infidelity in the Claudian Court

Although the *Octavia* is concerned primarily with the follies of Neronian Rome, the story of the dynasty's collapse takes the audience back to the disastrous marriages of Claudius. Octavia and her Nurse repeatedly interpret Messalina's libidinous past as an origin story for their own misery and for the collapse of the Claudian house.⁸

gravi deorum nostra iam pridem domus
urgetur ira, prima quam pressit Venus
furore miserae dura genetricis meae,
quae nupta demens nupsit incesta face,
oblita nostri, coniugis, legum immemor.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 257–61)

For a long time our house has been beset by the grievous wrath of the gods, the house which hard Venus first oppressed through the frenzy of my miserable mother, a woman who, out of her mind, already a bride married under a foul torch, forgetful of us, of her husband, forgetful of the laws.

Octavia weaves her narrative of her mother's fall out of a constellation of elegiac images and motifs. She remembers a *misera* woman oppressed by love's frenzy (*furor*) and by an implacable (*dura*) Venus until she is driven

out of her mind (*demens*) by her passion. Drawing her words and images from Latin love elegy, Octavia rewrites the empress' dramatic fall on the generic model of elegy's tribulations.⁹

Messalina's actions also look to one important moment in elegy in particular: the programmatic opening of Propertius' first book of poems:

Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
 contactum nullis ante Cupidinibus.
 tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus
 et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus
 donec me docuit castas odisse puellas
 improbus et nullo vivere consilio.
 ei mihi, iam toto furor hic non deficit anno,
 cum tamen adversos cogor habere deos. (Prop. 1.1.1–8)

Cynthia first captured wretched me with her eyes, untouched before by any desires. Then Love rid my eyes of their stubborn arrogance and pressed down my head with his feet, until he – the wicked one! – taught me to hate chaste girls and live without a plan. Alas for me, now this frenzy has not abated for a whole year though I am forced to have the gods opposed to me.

Like *miser* Propertius (Prop. 1.1.1), *misera* Messalina is oppressed (*pressit*, Oct. 258–9) by love, bent to divine will, and infected with a *furor* (frenzy) that she cannot shake (Prop. 1.1.7; Oct. 259). This *furor*, in turn, drives her away from the path of chaste love (*castas odisse puellas*, “to hate chaste girls,” Prop. 1.1.5) and toward erotic ruin (*incesta face*, “under an unchaste torch,” Oct. 260). In other words, the playwright has Octavia read her mother in terms of a paradigmatic *amator* in order to highlight the depths of Messalina's madness. In doing so, we see how Messalina, like Propertius and other lovers in the elegiac tradition, abandons the role that society has scripted for her, forgetting her family, her husband, and the law of the land (Oct. 261). *Roma* means nothing when confronted with the power of *amor* (love).¹⁰

At the same time, the play's wider mapping of this empress' lust onto the lover's plight highlights their divergent social responsibilities. The elegiac *amator* chafes at performing the traditional role of the elite citizen and sequesters himself within a world devoted to lovers' games. Although this self-seclusion often creates tensions explored in erotic poetry, in the end the *amator* is largely a free agent, sometimes threatened but never caught.¹¹ Messalina, however, is not only a wife but is *the* wife of Rome, a fact that Octavia reminds us of when she uses the terms *domus* (“imperial household,” Oct. 257) and *genetrix* (“mother,” 259).¹² Messalina, as imperial wife and

mother, is meant to be a living paragon of the virtues of the *domus Augusta*, a Venus *genetrix* on earth whose fecundity – and loyalty – guarantees the dynasty's stability.¹³ She must be a political actor first, just like her husband, and a woman second.

The public and political prominence of Messalina itself becomes a leit-motif throughout the play. Octavia goes on to say that her mother not only betrayed her marriage but also the imperial *domus*, as if she were an enemy inside the walls who hands Rome over to the forces that would destroy it (*prodidit lapsam domum*, "she betrayed her fallen house," 269). Her nurse agrees, noting that Messalina "paid severe penalties for her madness" (*graves furoris quae sui poenas dedit*, 272).

So, too, when the chorus of Roman citizens returns to Messalina's folly at the end of the play, they begin with an account of her extraordinary power: the devotion of her husband and her fertility made her all powerful, until her infidelity cost her her life (*quid non potuit quondam genetrix / tua quae rexit principis aulam / cara marito partuque potens?*, "What could she not once accomplish, your mother who ruled the emperor's palace, dear to her husband and powerful in her offspring?" 947–9). And, like Octavia, they turn to the world of elegy to make sense of Messalina's story, in which her destruction was brought about when she "debased herself with her own slave" (*famulo subiecta suo*, 950). The chorus' use of the word *famulus* (slave) has occasioned some interpretive consternation, given that Messalina's lover Silius hardly fits this description.¹⁴ But the *Octavia's* wider use of the language of slavery within sexual relationships generally maps the players onto prominent elegiac dichotomies, regardless of historical veracity.¹⁵ Indeed, Messalina is remembered as a performer of *servitium amoris*, a *topos* so often at the centre of elegiac negotiations of power and passion. At the same time, here too we see this elegiac mode of passion and *perfidia* playing out on the political stage as treason against the state.¹⁶ And Messalina is hardly the only imperial woman whose elegiac echoes become tragic histories.

Claudius' next wife is equally treacherous. Though Agrippina is no *demens amator* (insane lover) who debases herself with inappropriate sexual liaisons (not in this play, at least),¹⁷ she too acts out a script provided by elegy when she manipulates Claudius' passions:

... qui nato suo
praeferre potuit sanguine alieno satum
genitamque fratris coniugem captus sibi
toris nefandis flebili iunxit face.
hinc orta series facinorum.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 139–43)

[Claudius,] who was capable of preferring one born of another to his own son, seized with desire for his brother's daughter he joined her as wife to his foul marriage bed under a funeral torch. Here began a series of crimes.

Agrippina makes Claudius and his imperial household perform a kind of *servitium amoris* (*servitque domus*, "the household was enslaved," 32), while she herself is cast as another elegiac *topos*: the greedy *meretrix* (prostitute) who uses her wiles to seduce powerful men into inappropriate unions and who gains glittering *munera* (rewards) in the bargain.¹⁸ In this account of Agrippina's rise to the imperial throne, the nurse characterizes Claudius through the programmatic elegiac imagery of capture (*captus*) and fire (*face*).¹⁹ Claudius plays the infatuated *amator* whose desire makes him blind to anything but the beloved he pursues. Agrippina, however, is subject to none of *amor's* passions and instead plays the cold-hearted *domina* who keeps her men on the line, always wanting, always subservient, always ready to bestow favours to soften the fickle *puella*.

Just a few lines later, the nurse switches elegiac models as she imagines Agrippina now as the pursuer, confusing the boundaries of the active *amator* and the object of affection:

tantoque victrix facta successu ferox
 ausa imminere est orbis imperio sacri.
 quis tot referre facinorum formas potest
 et spes nefandas feminae et blandos dolos
 regnum petentis ...?

([Sen.] Oct. 155–9)

Having become triumphant through such success the wild woman dared to hunt for command of the sacred world. Who could narrate so many shapes of crime, the foul hopes of the woman, and her seductive tricks as she sought the throne?

As a huntress or warrior, Agrippina now wages a form of *militia amoris* (lover's war) against Claudius' house as if an *exclusus amator* (locked-out lover), using seductive tricks (*blandos dolos*) to enter the seat of power as conqueror (*victrix*) in order to achieve what she desires. But as with Mesalina, the aims of the erotic game that Agrippina is playing are far greater than those found in elegy. She seeks not baubles, poems, Coan silks, or even love, but palaces and "power over the sacred world" (*orbis imperio sacri*). In her adoption of the hybrid role of pursuant *domina*, Agrippina seduces Claudius first out of his power and then out of his life as her *perfidia* is slowly revealed.

Thus, in the case of both of his wives, Claudius plays an unfortunate combination of infatuated *amator* and besotted husband. He is blind as

each *domina's* extramarital activities escalate from erotic *perfidia* to a veritable coup-d'état that began in the bedroom. Although Octavia and her nurse disagree over which erotic misstep – *amator* Messalina or *domina* Agrippina – should be considered the original sin of the *domus* (*prima meorum causa malorum*, “the first cause of my misfortunes,” 11; cf. 157–9), the line of argument remains the same: the elegiac antics of an imperial woman bode ill for the state and its emperor.²⁰

This survey of the *dominae* of Claudian Rome serves to illustrate two points important to the rest of this chapter. First, the *Octavia* often represents love and fidelity in elegiac terms, as the imperial family play-acts the stock characters from Roman love poetry: the clueless husband, the infatuated and frenzied *amator*, the perfidious yet passionate *domina*, or some combination of the three. Second, and equally important, is how the play's use of the *domus Augusta* as elegiac stage ups the stakes of the *perfidia* that elegiac mistresses are known to show their lovers.²¹ When the *dominae* of elegy become the imperial *dominae* of Rome, *amor* and *Roma* become inextricably intertwined in a way that creates *discordia* within the imperial marriage chamber and threatens the very state.

Treachery and Marriage in Neronian Rome

As we turn from the women of the Claudian past to those of the Neronian present, we continue to see the poetics of elegy at work in the imperial bedroom. Octavia and her nurse's attention soon turns from the erotic missteps of Claudius' marriages to Nero's equally infelicitous pursuit of Poppaea. In particular, they describe Poppaea as an elegiac rival attempting to supplant Octavia by leading Nero down the path of amatory *perfidia*. Though Poppaea herself is highborn, in Octavia's eyes she becomes nothing but a *famula* (105) who has infected Nero with lust, turning him into a *servus* for her affection.²²

More distressing, however, is Poppaea's pursuit of power at any cost:

adice his superbam paelicem, nostrae domus
spoliis nitentem ...
... inimica victrix imminet thalamis meis
odioque nostri flagrat et pretium stupri
iustae maritum coniugis poscit caput.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 125–6, 131–3)²³

Add to this the fact that the proud whore glistens in the spoils of my house ... my enemy as conqueror hunts for my bed, burns with hatred of me, and demands as the price for her whoring the head of a true wife.

The *paelex* (mistress), as preening and vain (*superba*) as Propertius' Cynthia, follows an elegiac script as she exchanges her sexual favours for tokens of a new lover's affections.²⁴ Just as with Agrippina's wives, however, the relative position of the social actors here makes more serious their erotic struggle: this *paelex* demands no mere trinket, but the severed head of Octavia herself. Within these lines we can see a subtle shift in the way in which elegiac imagery and language is being used. Poppaea burns with passion, but (in Octavia's eyes at least) that passion is hatred for Octavia rather than love for Nero. This passion in turn drives Poppaea to wage an erotic war against her rival, Nero's current *domina*. This is no standard game of *militia amoris* waged over Nero's heart, but a battle that will be waged over Octavia's life and over world domination.²⁵

Octavia's complaints further underscore the threat that Poppaea poses through echoes of Propertius. In a poem devoted to the power women hold over men, Propertius describes an earlier *incesta meretrix* whose erotic war likewise brought Rome into peril:

quid, modo qui nostris opprobria nexerit armis
et famulos inter femina trita suos?
coniugii obsceni pretium Romana poposcit
moenia et addictos in sua regna patres? (Prop. 3.11.29–32)

What of the one who recently wove disgrace into our weaponry and the woman worn out by her own slaves? She demanded as the price of her obscene marriage the walls of Rome and the Senate added to her sovereign power.

In the eyes of the elegist, Cleopatra was willing to sell her body in exchange for control over Rome. While Poppaea's aims are more concrete (i.e., possession of Octavia's head), the stakes in the game are much the same: with the heir of Claudius executed, nothing would stand between Poppaea and the imperial domination she craves. Thus, Octavia conceives of Poppaea as far more than an erotic threat.²⁶ Rather, she is a woman whose unbridled sexuality and ability to seduce Roman leaders have turned her into a *dux femina* waging a war not for *amor* but for *Roma*. The marital and erotic *perfidia* that Poppaea encourages in Nero has ramifications that extend far beyond their imperial bedroom.²⁷

This escalation is important because it speaks to another curious break from the poetics of elegy that so dominate this opening scene. Though Octavia views Poppaea as a rival for the affections of her man, she feels none of the jealousy that one might expect from a woman wounded by that man's sexual *perfidia*.²⁸ Her nurse repeatedly borrows the didactic rhetoric of elegiac

persuasion as she instructs Octavia to win (back) the *immitis* (ungentle) heart of Nero with a display of *blandum obsequium* (seductive compliance): “just make yourself agreeable and conquer the man with seductive compliance,” (*tu modo blando vince obsequio / placata virum*, 84); “rather conquer the ungentle man with your own compliance” (*vince obsequendo potius immitem virum*, 177). In doing so, she invokes the *topos* through which an *amator* can approach and mollify the object of his or her affection.²⁹

But Octavia is not interested in playing these elegiac games of seduction with her perfidious husband’s affections, nor does she lie awake at night pining for Nero’s embraces. Rather, she wishes him to keep his elegiac *oscula* far away from her (*poena nam gravior nece est / ... / ... iungere atque hosti oscula*, “for it is a punishment worse than death ... to join kisses with my enemy,” 108–10). Octavia is inflamed by passion for Nero, but it is the passion of disgust, and the feeling is mutual (*odio pari / ardens mariti mutua flagrat face*, “burning with a hatred equal to her husband’s, she kindles a fire from their mutual torch,” 49–50).³⁰ The imagery of matched, mutual passion that erupts in flames is itself drawn from elegiac notions of love, and the recycling of this imagery here only articulates further the depths of their conjugal hatred. Octavia would just as soon see Nero die than be in his presence, let alone in his bed.³¹ Thus, while she may fit into the generic mould of the *relicta puella* (abandoned lover) who cries accusations of *perfidia* into the night, the reality is that no *amor* or *fides* has ever existed between them as husband and wife.

This is, in fact, Nero’s central problem and the reason he seeks a new marriage at all. For the entirety of their relationship, Octavia has been playing impossible to get. Ever since the start of their marriage, Nero laments to Seneca, “my wife’s soul has never been joined to mine” (*animusque numquam coniugis iunctus mihi*, 537). The language of his complaint, and especially his use of the word *iungere* (to join), puts his amatory agony in dialogue with imagery familiar from elegiac descriptions of lovers’ bonds.³² Moreover, the curious lament betrays something of a romantic in the play’s villainous emperor.³³ Nero, it seems, wants a wife who returns his affection.

Seneca recognizes the erotic colour of Nero’s complaint and speaks to him in turn, offering his own explanation for Octavia’s behaviour that is also rooted in elegiac theories of female psychology. Seneca reasons that her spurning of Nero is not genuine; rather, she is a woman desperately in love who strives to hide the flames of passion behind a veneer of appropriate female sexual behaviour (*teneris in annis haud satis clara est fides, / pudore victus cum tegit flammas amor*, “in girlish youth devotion is not yet clear enough, when love, conquered by shame, hides its flames,” 538–9).³⁴ There is no reason to doubt the *fides* of her bond to Nero, even if it is *haud*

satis clara (not yet clear enough). Seneca's erotic analysis makes explicit what has remained implicit thus far: within the symbolic economy of the play's depiction of imperial marriage, *amor* and *fides* are two sides of the same coin. With passion comes fidelity, and with fidelity comes the stability within which *amor* can continue to flourish.

As the scene proceeds, we see that Nero agrees with Seneca's theory of marriage: love creates the bond of loyal stability upon which the *domus Augusta* depends. Where he disagrees, however, is in Seneca's assessment of his current wife:

hoc equidem et ipse credidi frustra diu,
 manifesta quamvis pectore insociabili
 vultuque signa proderent odium mei,
 tandem quod ardens statuit ulcisci dolor. ([Sen.] *Oct.* 540–3)

This too I once believed in vain, though manifest signs from a loveless heart and face betrayed her hatred of me, a thing which at last my burning grief has decided to avenge.

Once more we see the code of love poetry at work as Nero analyses the *manifesta signa* (clear signs) that betray his wife's true feelings, and once more we see this elegiac code being turned to new readings.³⁵ The *manifesta signa* reveal not the *amor* that (Seneca argues) underpins Octavia's actions, but instead a heart that has always been and remains a *pectus insociabile* (hostile heart). Thus when Nero laments that he burns with *dolor* (grief) over Octavia's rejections, we do not hear the complaints of a lover dealing with a *dura puella* (cruel girl) who will ultimately unbolt the door.³⁶ Instead we hear the vengeful plans of an emperor sure that his marriage has always been grounded on a foundation of disloyalty and dislike. In this, the imperial couple seem perfectly matched: as the nurse earlier noted, they burn with an equal hatred, they seethe with a mutual desire for vengeance in a perverse inversion of an elegiac union between two paired souls (49–50).

But Nero has options other than his fickle, standoffish *domina*. In fact, as he goes on to share with Seneca, he has found the perfect woman:

dignamque thalamis coniugem inveni meis
 genere atque forma, victa cui cedet Venus
 Iovisque coniunx et ferox armis dea. ([Sen.] *Oct.* 544–6)

I have found a wife worthy of my bed in family and form, to whom Venus will yield vanquished and Jove's wife and the goddess fierce in arms.

His use of *digna* serves two complementary purposes. On a most basic level, it describes Poppaea's worthy lineage, underscoring that she is fit to bear imperial children for the *domus Augusta*.³⁷ It also looks to Poppaea's beauty and her suitability as *materies* (subject matter) for Nero's elegiac fantasies.³⁸ This secondary, erotic sense of Poppaea's worth is expanded upon in the lines that follow, as Nero borrows from poetic *codicilli* his competitive comparison of Poppaea to Venus, Juno, and Minerva. So too Propertius, when praising his Cynthia, told the three goddesses to yield (*cedite, iam, divae, quas pastor viderat olim / Idaeis tunicas ponere verticibus*, "yield, goddesses, whom the shepherd once saw put down their tunics on Ida's heights," Prop. 2.2.13–14; cf. 2.3.29–34).³⁹ Thus, as Nero hymns Poppaea's praises, he implicitly asserts that his *puella* would best Cynthia (and Helen and the goddesses) as the most beautiful woman on earth.

Seneca quickly pivots away from his earlier assertions about Octavia's amorous intentions. Instead, he reminds Nero that a royal wife's best qualities are her propriety and *fides* (*probitas fidesque coniugis, mores pudor / placeant marito*, "let moral rectitude and the loyalty of a wife, her sense of shame, her morals please her husband," 547–8), language that foregrounds yet again the role that *fides* plays as a cornerstone in the virtuous behaviour of imperial women. In doing so, he too recalls the expectations that the *amator* puts on the beloved for fidelity and loyalty.⁴⁰ But he also echoes advice given in a very different context: in the *Thyestes* of his historical counterpart, a *satelles* dares to tell an enraged Atreus that, without these virtues, especially *fides*, the kingdom will remain unstable.⁴¹ These allusive borrowings in turn reinforce the double-edged nature of Seneca and Nero's conversation, which is as much about the emperor's sexual life as it is about ensuring political stability. Without the sexual and political *fides* of a suitable wife, Nero's Rome is doomed.

Once more, Nero agrees with Seneca's theories of marriage, even if he sidesteps Seneca's insinuation that Octavia is better suited for the position of wife. In Nero's eyes, Seneca's marital advice is only further proof that the future lies with Poppaea, and for reasons beyond her looks. As far as Nero is concerned "a god brought all these praiseworthy attributes [including, presumably, *fides*] into one woman and the fates willed her to be born just for me" (*omnes in unam contulit laudes deus / talemque nasci fata voluerunt mihi*, 551–2). This praise, in turn, is rooted in elegiac statements about the *domina*'s various charms, her singular suitability as a partner in love, and the destiny that brings true lovers together.⁴² Such statements likewise influence Nero's subsequent prayer that "Amor join Poppaea to my bed with the fiery marital torch" (*iungatque nostris igne Poppaeam toris*, 571). But the erotic pedigree of Nero's imagery and language does not *a priori*

contradict the *princeps*' political considerations. Where Octavia offered an *animus numquam iunctus* ("soul never joined") and the fires of hatred, Poppaea offers a faithful union (*iungat*) founded on the fires of mutual passion, and from that passion a stable kingdom will be born.⁴³

Many have read this scene as centring on a conflict between Nero's irrational elegiac *amor* for Poppaea and the sensible *pudor* of Octavia, which better befits an imperial *domina* – in essence, an archetypal contest between Nero's *id* and *ego*. Nevertheless, I mean to advance another reading, one that reveals that Nero's interests are as much political as they are sexual. The elegiac *fides* that Seneca and Nero seek from an empress comes with political benefits: *concordia* (peace) and the resultant children that will shore up the dynasty.⁴⁴ These are not trivial matters. Not only does Octavia refuse to share his bed, but the *perfidia* of her mother casts aspersions on her own lineage and perhaps even on her own behaviour as empress (*incesta genetrix detrahit generi fidem*, "her unchaste mother calls into question the trust of her lineage," 536). While Octavia's disloyalty has not translated into an extramarital affair, her *perfidia* is just as insidious, as she plots against him and denies him the ability to produce imperial heirs.⁴⁵ The hatred and disloyalty she shows Nero do not merely wound his heart, they threaten his realm. One cannot neatly separate the private familial *fides* that Nero desires from the public ramifications of its absence.⁴⁶

Fides and Perfidia in the Roman People

While it might seem that Nero's concerns about the connection between amatory and political *fides* are the paranoid delusions of a stock tyrant, the play makes clear again and again how the absence of *fides* and *amor* for the reigning emperor can turn Julio-Claudian women into traitors. And this is not the only danger that imperial women engender. The very popularity of these women and the love that the people feel for them can likewise turn them into sites of conflicting *fides* that promote *discordia* (political unrest) within the state.⁴⁷ As Buckley astutely observes, in her chapter in this volume, "*fides* is a peculiarly potent concept in examining the fault-lines of Roman identity exposed by the interaction of *princeps* and people, imperial Rome and the republican past" in the *Octavia*. As I hope to demonstrate in this section, an additional fault-line can be found within the imperial *domus*, one that pits *princeps* against *populus* and perhaps even *populus* against itself.

In its first appearance on stage, the chorus of Roman citizens laments Neronian crime, with an extended account of the murder of Agrippina

(309–75). While the queen herself takes centre stage as she thrashes around in the sea, only to be stabbed to death by her son's minions, the citizen chorus also highlights briefly the actions of those who tried in vain to save her.⁴⁸

mansit tacitis in pectoribus
 spreta tristi iam morte *fides*.
 multi dominae ferre auxilium
 pelago fractis viribus audent;
 braccia quam vix lenta trahentem
 voce hortantur manibusque levant.

([Sen.] Oct. 350–5)

There remained in silenced hearts a *loyalty* that spurned even grim death. Many dared to bring help to their *domina* on the sea, their strength broken. They encouraged her with their voices as she dragged her tired arms and they lifted her up with their hands.

As Rolando Ferri points out, *tacitus* is more often seen in contexts that highlight actions taken against one's will.⁴⁹ Here, however, we have something quite different. The chorus describes a group of people whose hearts have long been silenced but within which *fides* for Agrippina lives on. This *fides* is so strong that it makes them unafraid of death (*spreta tristi ... morte*, "with grim death spurned"); it is so strong that it causes them to defy their emperor by daring (*audent*) to offer help to the *domina* he has tried to assassinate. And they are hardly a small band of insignificant mariners: many (*multi*) boldly bring aid to the *domina* to whom they are devoted. They keep fighting, even as the sea battles them at every turn and even as their strength is broken (*fractis viribus*).⁵⁰ With their help alone, she reaches shore, and for this brief moment the loyal citizens become the heroes of the story. Of course, as the chorus goes on to lament, none of this mattered. She is killed as soon as she sets foot on land (361–76); no one can stop the murderous rage of her son.

This episode is important for several reasons. First, the language of silenced hearts and regime-challenging daring puts the people's actions in dialogue with the language of conspiracy and martyrdom, in which an oppressed group dares to express their political partisanship openly even in the face of certain death. This is a group of citizens whose loyalty lies not with the imperial family en masse or necessarily with the ruling emperor, but rather with one imperial woman for whom they feel a special *fides*.⁵¹ In the end, this *domina*-specific brand of *fides* engenders political *perfidia*, as it drives them into treasonous waters to save a woman whom the emperor has decided is an enemy of the state.

Equally significant are the citizens who narrate this story and who choose to heroize the actions of their Campanian counterparts as they focalize Agrippina's struggle through the eyes of those who remained steadfast in their *fides* to her. Throughout the play, the Roman citizens who make up this chorus consistently sympathize with the plight of Agrippina. To them she is an eternal martyr sacrificed on the altar of her son's treacherous ambition.⁵² This perspective contrasts strikingly with that of Octavia and her nurse, to whom Agrippina is a cruel, murderous stepmother who, like an Erinys, brought down the Julio-Claudian house.⁵³ Thus, it is not that the play in general offers a positive portrayal of Agrippina, but that the Roman people in particular seem to view her this way as an individual locus of power who still commands their *fides* and love.

This same group of citizens remains steadfastly loyal to Octavia throughout the play as well, even as this loyalty brings them into conflict with Nero.⁵⁴ Their anger begins within this very ode: they are sorry to hear that a new wife will replace Octavia in Nero's bed (*nec nova coniunx nostri thalamos/principis intret, teneatque suos / nupta penates Claudia proles*, "nor let a new wife enter our emperor's bedchamber, and let the Claudian daughter hold her own Penates as wife," 276–8). They want to see Octavia bear Nero children; they want to see the Julio-Claudian dynasty grounded in her lineage (*edat partu pignora pacis, / qua tranquillus gaudeat orbis / servetque decus Roma aeternum*, "may she produce tokens of peace in which the tranquil world will rejoice and through which Rome can protect her eternal glory," 279–81). Only with Octavia as empress will the empire maintain *pax* (peace) and remain a *tranquillus orbis* (tranquil world), a statement that becomes increasingly threatening in retrospect. While we the audience know that their wishes are impossible, due to Octavia's intransigent hatred for Nero and refusal to share his bed, the people's loyalty to their princess soon drives them to *furor*:

affligat humo violenta manus
similes nimium vultus dominae
ipsamque toris detrahat altis,
petat infestis mox et flammis
telisque feri principis aulam.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 685–9)

Let our violent hands hurl to the ground the images too similar to that *domina* and let's drag her herself from her high bed, let's then seek with hostile flames and weapons the palace of the cruel emperor.

When we next meet the chorus, they have roused themselves to attack the statues of Nero's new *domina* and quickly escalate to plans to attack the palace itself and its monarch. In other words, their passionate *fides* for Octavia

and their heroizing of those who dared to rise up in support of Agrippina have driven them to open treason.

Octavia herself had feared this outcome. As she left the imperial palace for the final time, noting the elegiac triumph of her *famula*-rival (*non ego ... cogar / ... invisos intrare mihi / thalamos famulae*, "nor shall I be forced to enter the hated bedroom of my slave," 654–7), she warned the people that their obsessive loyalty to her might prove dangerous (*ne tantus amor nostrique favor / principis acres suscitet iras*, "lest your excessive love and partisanship for me arouse the emperor's sharp anger," 648–9). But instead of using the more appropriate term, *fides*, Octavia uses *amor* to underscore the crowd's devotion. *Amor* appears elsewhere in the play only in erotic contexts.⁵⁵ By using the term here in this context, Octavia implicates the Roman people's attachment to her within the interlocked, erotic symbolic system of personal and political passion that we have seen is at the heart of the imperial *domus*.⁵⁶ The people's *amor* for Octavia puts their *fides* at odds with their *princeps* and his reign, creating schisms in the *concordia* of the imperial system.

This is no minor point. The Roman people want the impossible: that Octavia and Nero would have a loving, loyal marriage based on *concordia* that produces children. Their passionate love of and loyalty to her make them ready to kill for Octavia, or ready to die for her, just as their counterparts were ready to save Agrippina at all costs. The seriousness of the threat is such that Nero begins to doubt even his own prefect, suspecting that he too harbours *fides* not toward Nero but toward his erstwhile wife:

Prf.	Cur meam damnas <u>fidem</u> ?	
Ne.	Quod parcis <u>hosti</u> . Prf. Femina hoc nomen capit?	
Ne.	Si scelera cepit. Prf. Estne qui sontem arguat?	
Ne.	Populi furor.	([Sen.] Oct. 863–6)

Prf.	Why do you suspect my <u>loyalty</u> ?
Ne.	Because you spare an <u>enemy</u> .
Prf.	Can a woman take up this title?
Ne.	If she takes up crime.
Prf.	Is there someone who would declare her guilty?
Ne.	The frenzy of the people.

The Roman people's frenzy (*populi furor*) has made their beloved Octavia into an enemy of the state (*hostis*). Only the execution of Octavia and the mass execution of those loyal to her can assuage Nero's concerns over *perfidia* spreading throughout his empire (820–43).

There is, however, another group of Roman citizens in the play who do not rebel and who offer a very different perspective on the *amor* and *fides*

that attends Julio-Claudian women. We meet them first after Nero's wedding to Poppaea, and it is to them that the messenger first announces the news that their rebellious counterparts are attacking the palace and seeking to murder the newlyweds:

- Cho. Quis iste mentes agitat attonitus furor?
 Nvn. Octaviae favore percussa agmina
 et efferata per nefas ingens ruunt.
 Cho. Quid ausa facere quove consilio doce.
 Nvn. Reddere penates Claudiaei diri parant
 torosque fratris, debitam partem imperi.
 Cho. Quos iam tenet Poppaea concordi fide?
 Nvn. Hinc urit animos pertinax nimium favor
 et in furorem temere praecipites agit. ([Sen.] Oct. 785–93)

- Cho. What thunderstruck madness stirs up their minds?
 Nun. Struck by partisanship for Octavia and incapable of being reined in, their
 battle-lines rush into great crime.
 Cho. Teach us what they dare to do or with what plan.
 Nun. They prepare to return the palace and the bed of her dire brother to Claudia, her owed share of empire.
 Cho. The bed Poppaea now holds with peaceful loyalty?
 Nun. Their excessive favouritism burns their minds and drives them headlong
 rashly into madness.

Their separation from the revolutionary chorus and their horror at the news has often led them to be viewed only as obsequious courtiers who parrot Nero's opinions.⁵⁷ And while it is true that they too praise Poppaea's beauty in similarly elegiac terms (e.g., 762–77), this alone should not be enough to impugn their opinions or to sideline their importance to the play. Like Nero, their attachment to Poppaea is not based solely on her physical attributes. Instead, like Nero, they see her as a pillar of stability that guarantees the safety of the state. For, unlike Octavia, Poppaea's claim on Nero's bed is solidified by steadfast, harmonious loyalty (*concordi fide*).⁵⁸ From Poppaea's marital *fides*, so this group of citizens seem to believe, peace will spring.

On one level, this is the standard praise of a new marriage, but the status of the players once more speaks to larger political concerns. These citizens long for stability and chafe at the idea that the *populus* would revolt, seeing their compatriots driven by a toxic cocktail of *furor* and *favor* rather than the *fides* they owe their emperor. They recognize the political importance of marital harmony and, conversely, the danger inherent in a *domina* who opposes her emperor.

Whatever positive qualities Octavia has as Claudius' virtuous daughter, she has never brought *concors fides* (harmonious loyalty) to her marriage. Thus they react with horror that their fellow citizens would wage war for (in their view) the wrong imperial woman (*quid fera frustra bella movetis?* "why do you wage wild wars in vain?" 806). Unfortunately for Octavia and for the rest of the Roman people, their pleas go unheeded. The *perfidia* within the imperial marriage chamber has created a state at war with itself, a war from which Neronian Rome and the Julio-Claudian dynasty will never recover.

Remembering Female *Perfidia* in Flavian Rome

Beginning with Augustus, the Julio-Claudians claimed to have restored morality to the state and, in particular, to the Roman family, for which the women of the *domus Augusta* served as moralizing exempla.⁵⁹ With the advent of empire, so the rhetoric went, the "women out of control" that characterized the Triumviral period had been put back in the home, where they belonged. Female morality became a cornerstone of the *Pax Augusta* that the dynasty brought, turning the women of the imperial household into icons for virtues like *concordia*, *pietas*, and *fides*.⁶⁰ In the wake of AD 68, however, after the collapse of a dynasty that had seen nearly a dozen of its women publicly condemned for treasonous activity, things looked rather different.⁶¹ To an emerging Flavian Rome, the *fides* of those powerful, prominent imperial women suddenly seemed a much more open question.

This chapter has examined the representation of Julio-Claudian women in the anonymous historical drama, the *Octavia*. In particular it looked at the role of *fides* both as a term and as a concept throughout the play's staging of the reigns of Claudius and Nero. The playwright takes us into the bedrooms of the imperial family and uses the poetics of elegy to stage the significance of an empress' *perfidia* and the desire of the emperor to find a *domina* who will enter into a mutual bond of *amor* and *fides*.⁶² By tapping into the centrality of *fides/perfidia* in the representation of elegiac passion, the playwright turns the imperial bedroom into a stage for female *perfidia* while turning the imperial *domina* herself into a locus for public discord that pits *populus* against *princeps*. Just as Propertius uses amatory *fides* and *perfidia* as a starting point to explore the larger problems confronting Rome, so too the *Octavia* filters its representation of imperial women through elegy's representation of a world made up of fractured ethics. The breakdown in *fides* between man and wife mirrors the breakdown in *fides* within the state.⁶³ None of this is to blame Octavia or the people for hating Nero, or to excuse Nero by viewing him through the lens of a wounded lover. That the play vilifies Nero is so obvious it needs no confirmation. As Buckley argues

in the next chapter, “*fides* is clearly crucial in the *ignotus*’ analysis of what went wrong for Neronian Rome in the *Octavia*,” and this is especially true when it comes to Nero’s treatment of his subjects. But, I suggest, a part of the play’s vilification casts a wider net as it looks to the larger network of political mistakes that Rome’s first imperial family made.

Through these strategies of representation, the author asks us to view political disaster in gendered terms, from Messalina’s libidinous *perfidia* as the catalyst that doomed the entire Claudian family, to Nero’s description of his erstwhile wife as a *hostis* who threatens the stability of the state as if she were a general with an army at her back. The play’s male characters frequently assert that *fides* should be the representative virtue of these imperial women, and yet, as the play shows, *perfidia* is what they will be remembered for.⁶⁴ Over the course of its five emperors, Julio-Claudian Rome developed a proliferation of official, public punishments for powerful women, from exile to execution and memory sanctions.⁶⁵ After the fall of that dynasty it would be over a century before another imperial woman was executed for conflict with a reigning emperor.⁶⁶

As Harriet Flower argues, after the fall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, new claimants to power had to be seen as effective replacements, especially in areas where the previous dynasty was active and/or was perceived to have failed. “In this way, the new ruler inevitably played to the (albeit often unacknowledged) collective memory of the past while asserting his own role and right to shape the public image of that same past.”⁶⁷ When examined in this light, we can see that the *Octavia* actively participates in the early renegotiation of the cultural memory of Rome’s first dynasty and especially of its powerful women. It dramatizes both the unprecedented role that such women played in politics and also the dynastic strife that their power engendered. In doing so, it creates a dramatic memory space against which the Flavians can situate their own self-representation as true guardians of Rome’s values and as inaugurators of the age in which *Fides Publica* could safely return.⁶⁸ At the same time, the text stands as a warning to those who would buy into the idea that the principate fostered a return to traditional female virtues after the upheaval of the late republic. While the Flavian dynasty might suggest that, under their watch, female dynastic and political *perfidia* becomes a fundamental part of the past, the validity of such a claim remained to be tested as a new imperial *domus* brought a new set of women into the political spotlight.

NOTES

This chapter was originally presented at the 2016 Society for Classical Studies’ annual meeting in San Francisco, and I am grateful to that audience and to my fellow panelists for the many fine questions and comments that have strengthened

its arguments. Thanks are also due to the volume's editors, Antony Augoustakis, Emma Buckley, and Claire Stocks, and to the anonymous reviewers whose readings have improved it throughout. Any remaining faults are my own.

- 1 For the *thalamus* as a significant space in scenographic and ideological terms, see Kragelund 2005: 87–91, and 2016: 157–9. For the play's unusual use of interior scenes, see Smith 2003: 412–14, and Kragelund 2005: *passim*.
- 2 There is considerable debate over the date of the *Octavia*, though many (including myself) now favour a date somewhere in the early Flavian period. For a succinct summary of arguments for an early Flavian date, see Boyle 2008: xiii–xvi and Ginsberg 2017: 181–94; for a Galban date, see Kragelund 2016: 297–360; for a date under Domitian, see Ferri 2003: 5–30. In the end, the arguments advanced in this chapter do not rely on a Flavian date, especially given Vespasian's own appropriation of Galba's anti-Neronian rhetoric. The *Octavia*, regardless of when precisely we date its composition, is clearly engaged with the discourse on *fides* that this volume traces.
- 3 For the significance of *fides* to Propertius' poetry of *amor*, see, e.g., Prop. 1.4.15–16, 1.6.17–18, 1.11.15–16, 1.12.7–8, 1.15, 1.18.17–18. *Fides* also plays a key role also in the poetry of Tibullus (*nec saevo sis casta metu, sed mente fideli; / mutuus absenti te mihi servet amor*, "nor be chaste because of savage fear, but because of a loyal heart; let our mutual love protect you when I am absent," Tib. 1.6.75–6; cf. Tib. 1.8.63–4, 1.9.29–34, 2.2.11) and Sulpicia ([Tib.] 3.11.11–12). Ovid picks up the imagery in *Am.* 1.3, though returns to it less frequently. On *fides* and fidelity as a key theme in elegy, see Caston 2012, esp. 141–56. See also Lyne 1980: 24–41 on Catullus and his influence; Freyburger 1980 on the *foedus* (compact) of love in elegy; Miller 2003: 26–9 on elegy's debt to love lyric and its Augustan contexts; and Corbeill 2005 on Propertius and the Temple of Fides. For the semantic range of *fides* within the broader umbrella of lovers' speech, see Pichon 1966: s.v. *fides* and *fidus*.
- 4 Caston 2012, esp. 141–56. For further explorations of particularly elegiac *fides/perfidia* in Flavian literature, see the chapters by Keith, Kozak, and Stocks in this volume.
- 5 This is not to say that the *fides* that an *amator* pledges to his beloved is always the same *fides* that is returned (see below, note 21), nor to suggest that either is identical to the *fides* that underpins the Roman marriage compacts with which elegists are in dialogue. Rather, this chapter explores the semantic range of *fides* and the idea of fidelity in the *Octavia* and argues that the playwright adopts this very semantic range and its attendant *topoi* from Roman elegy, rewriting imperial marriage through pronounced elegiac modes.
- 6 In doing so, Propertius builds on Catullus' use of the language of social and political obligation in his love poetry; see especially Skinner 2003: 60–95, although this aspect of Catullus' poetics has received much attention.

- 7 Important groundwork here was laid by Danesi Marioni 1996, but while she views the play's engagement with elegy as surprising, given love's secondary importance in political drama, I view that very tension between *amor* and *Roma* – and between the differing *fides* created as a result – as central to the play's historical message.
- 8 *Prima meorum causa malorum*, "the first cause of my misfortunes," *Oct.* 11; *prodidit lapsam domum*, "she betrayed her fallen house," *Oct.* 269. Citations of the *Octavia* come from Zwierlein 1986 unless otherwise noted. All translations are my own.
- 9 Ferri 2003 and Boyle 2008: *ad loc* are surely right to highlight the tragic framework of Messalina's story, and so too Octavia's memories of her mother owe something to Virgil's Dido (see also Ginsberg 2017: 53–5). Nevertheless, such discussions overlook the scene's equally significant engagement with elegy. *Miser* (wretched) becomes a programmatic term for the *amator* (lover) after Propertius' use of it in his opening line (see Hinds 1998: 29–33). So too madness, illness, and the harsh qualities of love and the beloved appear omnipresent in Latin love poetry.
- 10 Tacitus' Messalina is scripted in similar terms, though the possibility that the *Octavia* influenced Tacitus' *Annales* should not be discounted. See especially Joshel 1997 and Fagan 2002.
- 11 For the tensions between the elegiac and the politically engaged life, see, e.g., Prop. 1.6, 1.14, 4.1b.133–6, Ov. *Am.* 1.9, 2.3. Elegy's poetics require an *amator* who chooses a life of *inertia* (laziness) and *otium* (leisure) over the Forum and the *cursus honorum* (political ladder).
- 12 Curiously, many scholars suggest that the *Octavia* is unique in portraying Messalina positively: see Barnes 1982; Schubert 1998: 289 with n. 135; Flower 2006: 207; and Michel 2013: 752. But while Octavia may mourn for her mother and while Messalina's elegiac script might render her sympathetic to a certain degree, the destruction she caused is hardly understated nor her blame questioned.
- 13 Messalina's *fecunditas* (fertility) and her goddess-like qualities were publicly promoted; see Wood 2000: 274–89. For Venus' dual role in the *Octavia* as goddess of sex and ancestress of the Julian line, see Boyle 2008: 149.
- 14 Many modern editors (Whitman 1978, Chaumartin 1999, Ferri 2003, and Boyle 2008) see an allusion to Narcissus rather than Silius on the basis of the word *famulus*. This overlooks, however, the role that the stock figures of elegy play in shaping the audience's memory of the imperial family throughout the drama, and thus I think that the Silian identification should be reconsidered, following Pedrolí 1954 and Ballairà 1974.
- 15 See below, note 22, on the confusion over the *famula* whom Octavia views as usurping her position.

- 16 Deschamps 2009 views Messalina's *furor* as a curse inherited from Augustus' role in the civil wars, creating a fusion of sexual and political *furor* in the *Octavia*'s representation of harmful passion. While his arguments complement those of this chapter, Octavia is clear that her mother's unchastity is a *prima causa*, not the result of a preceding curse.
- 17 As Ginsburg 2006: 119–30 has amply demonstrated, historical accounts of Agrippina often paint her as a sexual transgressor. The *Octavia*, however, pays little heed to this strand of the tradition.
- 18 For the greedy *puella/meretrix* as a trope of elegy (drawn from New Comedy), cf., e.g., Ov. *Ars* 1.419–36 and 3.553–4, *Rem.* 301–6 and 317–22. See especially Konstan 1995: 150–8 and James 2001 and 2003: 71–107. See also Keith's analysis (in this volume) of Eriphyle's analogous love of finery combined with *perfidia*.
- 19 For the programmatic use of *capere* in Propertian elegy, cf. Prop. 1.1.1, 2.3.9, 2.15.15, 3.10.15–16. Propertius' comments on Cynthia's seductive ensnaring may also lie behind the *Octavia*'s description of Agrippina here: *ista sum captus ab arte; / semper ad insidias, Cynthia, flere soles* ("I am captured by your trickery, Cynthia; you're always used to crying for treacherous purposes," Prop. 3.25.5–6).
- 20 For a wider discussion of various attempts to designate a *prima causa* for the family's current collapse, see Smith 2003: 405–7.
- 21 For the beloved's *perfidia*, real or imagined, see, e.g., Prop. 1.11.16, 1.15, 2.5.3, 2.9a.28; Tib. 1.6.75–6, 1.8.63–4, 1.9.77–80, [Tib] 3.11.11–12, 3.16. Though Ovid himself seems less concerned about *perfidia* in his *Amores*, cries of *perfidie* run throughout his *Heroides* and the *Ars Amatoria*.
- 22 Much like the controversy about the *famulus* with whom Messalina debases herself, the *famula* (slave) here and at 657 (*thalamos famulae*, "slave's bedroom") is often read as Acte rather than Poppaea, due to the latter's lineage. See, e.g., Boyle 2008: *ad loc.* Nevertheless, for the same reasons as outlined above, I follow Ferri 2003 in viewing the *famula* as Poppaea in both places in accordance with the literary, elegiac texture of the rivalry between the two empresses.
- 23 The marked Propertian echo (examined below) lends credence to Zwierlein's choice to prints Gronovius' *poscit* (demands) over the MS tradition's *captat* (snatches at) preferred by the *Octavia*'s recent editors. At the same time, however, the adoption of *captat* would not much weaken the intertextual echo, as Ferri 2003 notes *ad loc.*
- 24 For the arrogance of Cynthia and other elegiac *puellae*, see Prop. 1.10.21–30, 1.18.25–6, 2.1.7–8, 3.9.35–6, 3.25.1–2; Tib. 1.8.77, 1.9.77–80, [Tib] 3.11.3–4.
- 25 An analogous if not identical phenomenon happens in Lucan, in which "it is not love that is warfare but warfare ... that is love" (McCune 2014: 172). The

Octavia conflates the elegiac sense of wars of love and the Lucanian sense of love of war into one story of destruction.

- 26 As Boyle 2008: *ad loc* notes, Octavia's figuring of Poppaea as a modern Cleopatra also creates an interesting synkrisis in which Octavia replays the sorrows of the ancestress who shared her name.
- 27 So too Lucan builds on Propertius' Cleopatra when he uses her elegiac avatar as greedy *meretrix* to characterize Caesar's political failings. See Caston 2011 and McCune 2014: 182–3.
- 28 See Caston 2012, esp. 49–73.
- 29 Cf. Ovid's extended discussion of the utility of *obsequium* in softening what is *immitis* (Ov. *Ars* 2.177–84). See also Prop. 1.8.39–40, 1.10.21–30; Tib. 1.4.39–40; Ov. *Am.* 2.3.5–6, 3.4.11–12. Several of these linguistic and thematic parallels are noted also by Danesi Marioni 1996, who discusses them more for their elegiac pedigree than the role of these allusions in shaping our interpretation of the *Octavia* and Neronian history.
- 30 Cf. *coniugi invisa*, "hateful to a husband" (*Oct.* 104).
- 31 For Octavia's wish to see Nero dead (even if at her own hands), see *Oct.* 55–6, 174–6, 227–51.
- 32 For *iungere* as amatory bond, see, e.g., Prop. 1.10.15, 2.15.25–8, 3.17.5–6, 4.11.31–6; Tib. 1.1.69, 1.6.59–60; Ov. *Am.* 1.3.26, 1.13.6, 2.5.23–4.
- 33 Garson 1975 goes too far in characterizing this as a "plea for Nero," but his close reading of the desperate unhappiness of husband and wife and his highlighting of Nero's earlier hopes for a mutual love merit further consideration.
- 34 In other words, on Seneca's reading she becomes a veritable Sulpicia or, perhaps less auspiciously, a Dido. For the importance of *pudor* (sense of shame) to Sulpicia's elegies and for Sulpicia's possible debt to Dido in this regard, see Keith 1997: 295–310.
- 35 A commonplace of love poetry is that the *puella*'s hostility betrays her passion (e.g., Cat. 83, Prop. 3.8.1–10). For the *signa* of love elsewhere, cf. also Prop. 1.18.17; Ov. *Am.* 2.1.7–10, 2.8.7–8.
- 36 For *dolor* as a symptom of erotic distress, see, e.g., Prop. 1.1.37–8, 1.7.7–8, 1.13.9–10, 2.5.10, 2.8.36, 2.22B.1–8, 2.25.1; Tib. 1.2.1, 2.4.7, 2.5.109–12, [Tib] 3.16.5–6.
- 37 As Boyle 2008: *ad loc.* recognizes, Nero here consciously surpasses Ovid's praise of Livia (*sola est caelesti digna reperta toro*, "she alone was found worthy of a divine bed," *Pont.* 3.1.118), turning Poppaea into an *exemplum* of imperial womanhood.
- 38 For "worthiness" as important to the *amator*'s relationship to his beloved, see Prop. 1.13.29–36, 2.2.5–8 (also in comparison to Juno, Minerva, and Venus), Prop. 2.3.39–40, [Tib] 3.12.9–10, 3.13.10.

- 39 See also Danesi Marioni 1996: 149–50.
- 40 For a wider discussion of these expectations, including *fides* (loyalty), *pudor* (sense of shame), *pudicitia* (chastity), and *pietas* (piety), see Caston 2012: 142–4. See also Bernstein’s discussion (in this volume) of Statius’ elegiac praise of his own loyal wife, which borrows from similar *topoi*.
- 41 *Ubi non est pudor / nec cura iuris sanctitas pietas fides / instabile regnum est* (“where there is no sense of shame, nor care of law, sanctity, piety, and loyalty, there is an unstable kingdom,” Sen. *Thy.* 215–17). On the *Octavia*’s engagement with this passage, see also Buckley in this volume.
- 42 So too Propertius saw Cynthia as a woman who exhibited all manner of charms and who “alone was born to be the glory of Roman women” (*gloria Romanis una es tu nata puellis*, Prop. 2.3.29). The notion of Cynthia as Propertius’ singular destiny runs throughout his corpus: e.g., Prop. 1.6.30–6, 1.12.19–20, 1.17.15–16. For Cynthia as Propertius’ *una puella* (singular girl) or *unus amor* (one and only love) see also 2.13.35–6, 4.1b.140.
- 43 The image of Poppaea as a Venus on earth whose love shored up Nero’s reign seems to have had much currency in Neronian Rome. A recently published Papyrus (*P.Oxy.* LXXVII 5105) containing a lengthy fragment on Poppaea’s apotheosis (modelled, it seems, on Hellenistic apotheosis literature such as the *Coma Berenices*) takes as its focal point Poppaea’s singular devotion to Nero and Venus’ devotion to their union; see Schubert 2011 and Gillespie 2014. On the wider connections between Venus and Poppaea in Neronian imagery, see Kragelund 2010 and 2016: 260–1. Thus Nero echoes his own historically attested propaganda.
- 44 That Poppaea is willing and able to bear Nero an heir is a central part of his debate with Seneca; cf., e.g., 530–5; 590–2. See also Octavia’s early comment at 188. To view Poppaea’s importance purely in erotic terms misses the political importance of this union for Nero and his *domus*. For the importance of children to the play’s confusing matrix of sexual and political imagery, see Smith 2003: 214–15. For children as a *foedus* that cements erotic and political alliances, see also Keith in this volume.
- 45 According to Tacitus and Suetonius, Nero accused Octavia of infidelity with a slave after divorcing her on the grounds of sterility (Tac. *Ann.* 14.60–5; Suet. *Nero* 35.2). Neither accusation appears in the *Octavia*.
- 46 See also Keith (this volume) for a complementary analysis of the private, familial role of *fides* (and its domestic and gendered resonances) and its wider political ramifications in the strife-ridden epic landscape of the *Thebaid*. While Statius’ women (on Keith’s reading) are largely devout in their *fides*, general political upheaval and fractured loyalties turn their expression of *fides* into further catalysts for destruction. On the inextricability of private *fides* from the broader theme of public loyalty to the emperor, see also Bernstein in this volume.

- 47 In the Introduction to this volume, the editors make an analogous argument about the conflict in *fides* that occurs when one is more loyal to a charismatic general than to Rome itself. Although the men in question are waging a public campaign (Pompey's generals), the fractured loyalty within the imperial family points to similar conflicts in the *Octavia*. When individual actors become *foci* for *fides*, the wider structures of loyalty to the state can break down.
- 48 I follow Ferri 2003 and Boyle 2008 in printing Lipsius' *quam vix* over the MS tradition's *quamvis*, which is printed in Zwierlein 1986.
- 49 See Ferri 2003: *ad* 350–1.
- 50 I follow Ballaira 1974 and Boyle 2008 in taking *fractis viribus* as an ablative absolute with the logical subject of the main clause, *multi*, rather than Agrippina (Ferri 2003).
- 51 This *fides* seems analogous to what Buckley (in this volume) argues is Seneca's interpretation of the term, "as societal glue, evoking a mutual dependence and reciprocity between the good ruler and his people." But here the "good ruler" has been replaced by an imperial woman of, at best, ambivalent status.
- 52 Cf. *saevi iacuit victima nati* ("she fell victim to her savage son," *Oct.* 957).
- 53 *Illa, illa meis tristis Erinys / thalamis Stygios praetulit ignes* ("That woman, a grim Fury, carried Stygian torches as bridesmaid to my wedding bed," *Oct.* 23–4); *vacuamque Erinys saeva funesto pede / intravit aulam* ("a savage Fury entered the empty palace with deadly step," *Oct.* 161–2).
- 54 See also Buckley (in this volume) on the difference between this chorus' definition of *fides* and that of Nero. She makes a compelling case that a catalyst for the *populus'* revolution is indeed conflicting ideas about the role of *fides* in monarchical government.
- 55 The one other exception is the chorus's description of the love the Roman people had for the Gracchi, a passage with important connections to this one: *perdidit ingens quos plebis amor / nimiusque favor* ("men whom the great love and excessive partisanship of the people destroyed," *Oct.* 882–3). There the chorus realizes the destructiveness of popular favour (see Ginsberg 2017: 161–7), an episode that foreshadows the result of the people's divided loyalty here. For a wider-ranging analysis of the importance of this passage, the terminology of *favor* (esp. 307), and the Nero/prefect dialogue cited in this chapter to the *Octavia's* conception of *fides* in the political sphere, see Buckley (this volume).
- 56 Smith 2003: 415 rightly notes that, "as violence begins to erupt in the second portion of the play, we find in the text a growing confusion between the imagery of marriage and sex, on the one hand, and the mechanics of political upheaval and revolution, on the other."
- 57 Pedroli 1954; Whitman 1978; Sullivan 1985: 59–72; Wiseman 2004: 264–72 and 2002; Fitch 2004; Kragelund 2005 and 2016; and Boyle 2008: *ad* 762. Nevertheless, I follow Ballaira 1974: *ad* 273ff; Manuwald 2001: 292–6; Ferri 2003; and Smith 2003 in seeing two distinct choruses of equal import, both

made up of Roman citizens. See the more extended discussion in Ginsberg 2017: 141–79, especially 154–61.

- 58 Evidence suggests that Poppaea was assimilated to *concordia* in public imagery (Rose 1997: 49; Varner 2001: 46–7 with n. 37) before the vicious collateral *damnatio memoriae* that occurred in the years after Nero's death. See also Stocks (in this volume) on the connection between *fides* and *concordia* in the civil war rhetoric of the late republic and early Augustan age, and the discussion of Sallust (*Cat.* 9.3) in the Introduction, which sees *fides* as foundation for republican Rome's *concordia*. The use of the collocation here, even with reference to family and marriage, plays into a similar anxiety felt by (this group of) Roman citizens about the political instability of Nero's reign.
- 59 Milnor's 2005 study of "gendered Augustanism" is essential reading; see also Corbier 1995; Joshel 1997; Keith 2000: 78–81; and Severy 2003. For the centrality of imperial women in dynastic imagery, see Rose 1997; Wood 2000; Flower 2006: 162–96; and Ginsburg 2006: 55–105.
- 60 Cf. iam *Fides* et Pax et Honos Pudorque / priscus et neglecta redire Virtus / audet ("now loyalty and peace and honour and that ancient sense of shame and neglected courage dare to return," Hor. *Saec.* 57–9). On Augustan *fides*, including its role as a virtue of imperial women, see Freyburger 1986. For *concordia*'s particular dual role as political and familial virtue, see Levick 1978: 217–29; Kellum 1990; Richardson 1992: 98–9; Flory 1984; Newlands 1995: 44–7; Rose 1997: 33, 49; Wood 2000: 77–8, 161, 210, 266, 282; Lobur 2008: 90–3; Breed, Damon, and Rossi 2010: 4–6; Gowing 2010; and Farrell 2013.
- 61 See esp. Varner 2001 and Flower 2006: 160–90.
- 62 This does not mean, however, that such a bond can save Nero, even if that is the hope of Nero himself and (some of) his people. As Keith (in this volume) shows with regard to Statius' *Thebaid*, in times of political upheaval there is often a marked contrast between the good intentions of loyal women and the results of those intentions. Loyal though Poppaea may be, the play seems to suggest that her role as wife will lead to her own demise and to Nero's.
- 63 Caston 2012: esp. 142–56.
- 64 The chapters collected in this volume point to a wider Flavian anxiety about female virtue, especially when it comes to women with political power; though no text represents female *fides* in exactly the same terms, again and again we see a woman's *fides* (or its absence) as a site of political conflict, engendering further strife. See especially the chapters by Augoustakis and Keith.
- 65 Flower 2006: 160–90.
- 66 Varner 2001: 72.
- 67 Flower 2006: 199.
- 68 For the Flavian dynasty's promotion of *Fides Publica* as a core element of their reign, especially during the reign of Vespasian, see the Introduction to this volume as well as the chapter by Stocks.

Fides under Fire: Virtue and Vice in the *Octavia*

EMMA BUCKLEY

Fratris thalamos sortita tenet
 maxima Iuno,
 soror Augusti sociata toris
 cur a patria pellitur aula?
 sancta quid illi prodest pietas
 divusque pater? quid virginitas
 castusque pudor?

Nos quoque nostri sumus immemores
 post fata ducis, cuius stirpem
 prodimus aevo suadente metu.
 vera priorum virtus quondam
 Romana fuit verumque genus
 Martis in illis sanguisque viris.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 282–94)

Greatest Juno is allotted to occupy the marriage-bed of her brother: why is the sister of Augustus, partner of his marriage-bed, driven from her father's palace? What good does her inviolate piety and deified father do? What good her virginity and chaste sense of modesty? We are forgetful even of ourselves: after the death of our leader, in an age inducing fear, we betray his offspring. Once there was a true Roman virtue in our forebears, and the true race and blood of Mars was in those men.¹

This excerpt from the first intervention of the chorus of Roman citizens in the *Octavia*, reacting in horror to the news that Nero plans to divorce his first wife, offers a striking encapsulation of the texture and tensions of this historical play. The *Octavia* constitutes an obsessive study in Roman identity, using the events of AD 62 to create a world of totalizing paradigms of virtue and vice, framed within a relentless contrast between “then” and “now.” The innocent victim, Octavia, defined here by a heaped collocation of

value-words (*sancta pietas, virginitas, castus pudor*), will be hard-pressed to fight against the dynamic tyranny of a Nero, a living embodiment of *impietas, libido*, and *luxuria* whose crimes will scarcely be credited by posterity. Nero's decision to divorce his sister-wife, Octavia, moreover, does not just constitute a decisive rejection of the ideology of Rome's timeless *imperium sine fine*. It also prompts the citizen body's recognition that an age of "true virtue" (*vera virtus*) – a virtue proved by its repeated and violent rejections of tyranny – is now past, its own lack of action a recognition that it is no longer the true race of Mars. In such a world, what becomes of *fides*?

Fides is a peculiarly potent concept in examining the fault-lines of Roman identity exposed by the interaction of *princeps* and people, imperial Rome and the republican past, in this play. Of course, *fides* is a paradigmatic Roman character-value, and one that is recurrent not just in the *Octavia*, or Senecan tragedy, but everywhere in Roman discourse, especially when it considers right behaviour and reciprocal relationships. In Lauren Ginsberg's chapter, we have already seen the intersection of the personal and political, through the intense and personal prism of elegiac *fides*, and in the shape of the charged political loyalties Julio-Claudian women display, fail to display, or evoke. In this chapter, I turn to the role of *fides* as a crucial element in the relationship between a ruler and his people, using *fides* as a prism through which to view the *Octavia's* exploration of Roman identity at the "state" level.² I start by showing how the *Octavia* deploys *fides* as lightning rod for reflection on the ideology of Roman government in ways that exploit the monarchic appropriation of the ideology of *fides* in (above all) *De Clementia*. I explore the author's sophisticated utilization of the cognitive collateral of *fides* in Nero's corrupt relationship with his soldiers, wife, and citizens, before turning to the role that the Roman people themselves play in attempting to articulate and reassert their own understanding of the *fides* between *princeps* and *populus*. Finally, I consider again the *Octavia's* final reflection on the republican, exemplary past. Recently, Lauren Ginsberg (2017) has stressed the self-conscious implication of all Romans in the *nefas* of the play. This chapter ends by noting the chorus' struggle to continue to assert an "objective" legitimacy of *fides* in its valorization of Octavia amidst other Republican examples of virtue, even as it acquiesces to an imperial script that writes failed *fides* as fickle *favor*. While there is simply not enough evidence to decide whether the play is a Flavian text, I conclude by suggesting that the interpretative bind the *Octavia* puts us in is a strikingly "Flavian" one. The *Octavia* provides a forensic, knowing, and even contaminating deconstruction of *fides*, even as it celebrates the downfall of Nero, refusing to admit within the play itself any straightforward hope for the return of *fides* and, indeed, *fides* under Vespasian.

Contesting Senecan *Fides*

The *Octavia* fuses the formal structures of Senecan tragedy and the Greek mythological paradigm with the historiographical exemplary tradition. Nero is written as a tyrannical Atreus, but he also conceptualizes his rule after the violence and civil conflict by which the Julio-Claudian family came to imperial power. Octavia paints herself as a tragic heroine who has suffered a worse fate than Electra, and one more pathetic than Iphigeneia: but her downfall is also framed by the chorus' recollection of other Roman imperial women who have fallen from the height of power. And at the heart of the play stands Seneca the Younger, who plays counsellor to Nero on the model of *Thyestes*. Unlike that play's *satelles*, who ends up colluding in Atreus' plan of revenge against his brother Thyestes, Seneca withdraws rather than be contaminated by such vice, leaving his argument for the exercise of Roman kingship – the rule by consensus articulated in *De Clementia* – to be jettisoned in favour of Nero's new vision of rule: the audacious adoption of *Thyestes* as his "playbook" for tyranny.³

It is well established, then, that we have in the *Octavia* two different Senecan visions of rule in competition in the central confrontation of the play. What uses of *fides* do both visions make? At first glance, the *Octavia*'s Nero seems to take a rather blunt approach. In fact, he immediately sweeps aside the notion that *fides* has anything to do with rule, arguing for the efficacy of brute force and fear against a Seneca who maintains that *fides* should be a central plank of good government:

NERO. Inertis est nescire quid liceat sibi.

SEN. Id facere laus est quod decet, non quod licet.

NERO. Calcat iacentem vulgus.

SEN. Invisum opprimit.

NERO. Ferrum tuetur principem.

SEN. Melius fides.

NERO. Decet timeri Caesarem.

SEN. At plus diligi.

NERO. Metuant necesse est –

SEN. Quidquid exprimitur grave est. ([Sen.] *Oct.* 453–8)

NERO. It is weak not to know what one can do.

SEN. Renown is doing what is right, not what one can.

NERO. The mob treads on the helpless.

SEN. And overthrows the loathed.

NERO. Steel protects the *princeps*.

SEN. *Fides* is a better protection.

NERO. It's right that Caesar be feared.

SEN. But more that he be loved.

NERO. That they fear me is essential –

SEN. Anything coerced is a burden.

At first blush, then, this Nero is channelling the “total licence” that is the hallmark of Atreus and evoking the world of *Thyestes*, a world in which the crimes of Tantalus are merely the starting point for an ever devolving decline, where there is no place for virtue at all, and where the terms *fides* and *pietas*, while recurrent, are always deployed negatively.⁴ Atreus – Senecan tyrant-villain *par excellence* – declares not just that Thyestes’ previous crimes merit the absence of *fas*, *fides*, and *ius omne*: his more provocative stance is that, if the categories of respect for the law (*cura iuris*), reverence (*sanctitas*), *pietas*, and *fides* do exist, they have nothing to do with the exercise of power. They are the virtues appropriate for little people, not for rulers: kings can do as they please (*sanctitas pietas fides / privata bona sunt. qua iuvat reges eant, Thy.* 217–18).

Atreus’ brutal articulation of the gulf between ruler and people does not simply identify him as tyrant: it also fatally undermines the concepts of reciprocity and mutuality pertaining to *fides* that structure Seneca’s alternate vision for rule by consensus in his philosophy, above all in *De Clementia*. Launching that treatise on the premise that everything is under Nero’s protection (*fidem tutelam, De Clem.* 1.1.5) and casting Nero’s rule as the return of a Golden Age in which “loyalty and integrity along with good faith and self-restraint ... rise again” (*pietatem integritatemque cum fide ac modestia resurgere, De Clem.* 2.1.4), Seneca returns again and again to the crucial notion of *fides* as societal glue, evoking a mutual dependence and reciprocity between the good ruler and his people.⁵ Seneca concentrates in particular on the role of *fides* in securing effective and trusting relationships in two spheres: the relationship between a leader and his people, and between a leader and his military followers. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that this mutual dependence is the foundation of *De Clementia* itself, the treatise almost immediately deviating into reflection on the interdependence of ruler and ruled (*De Clem.* 1.4), with Seneca borrowing from the bee-society of Virgil’s *Georgics* to make his point: “When their king is safe, they act with one mind. / When he has gone, they break their pact” (*rege incolumi mens omnibus una, / amisso rupere fidem, De Clem.* 1.4.1 = *G.* 4.212–13). And, in the biggest set-piece exemplum of *De Clementia*, Seneca articulates the process by which the relationship of Cinna and Augustus, framed at first as mutual hostility, is transformed – via Augustus’ *clementia*, of course – into one of mutual

and emulous trust. Augustus' famous challenge, "Let us compete with each other to see which of us acts in better faith – I, in granting you your life, or you, in owing it to me" (*contendamus utrum ego meliore fide tibi vitam dederim an tu debeas*, *De Clem.* 1.9.11), pays off brilliantly, Seneca concludes: Cinna becomes Augustus' most loyal and devoted follower (*amicissimum fidelissimumque*, *De Clem.* 1.9.12), and Augustus can now rule without the threat of rebellious uprising.

When the character-Seneca of the *Octavia* suggests *fides* over force as a "better way to rule," then, we might presume that the author of the play is activating a concept that sits at the very centre of the historical Seneca's vision for a Neronian ideology of rule, setting a collision course against Nero's Atrean vision of government. Yet, while the *Octavia*'s Nero certainly champions the Atrean ideal of rule by fear and argues that the people should be his slaves, not he their protector (*servire*, 492 versus *servare*, 495), he does not reject *fides* as a concept *tout court*, as the Atreus of Senecan tragedy does. Rather, he exerts particular pressure on the nature of mutual interdependence offered in the "good kingship" theory of *De Clementia*, laying bare the particular sleights of hand Seneca has deployed to make *fides* part of his argument for good governance. Seneca often uses *fides* in the sense of "mutual trust" in *De Clementia*, drawing on the bedrock of partnership and reciprocity fundamental to earlier Roman conceptualizations of *fides*, and making mutual trust between ruler and ruled the lynchpin of best government. Yet the vision of reciprocity he reveals in his treatise for the young emperor is, on closer inspection, far more unbalanced – and necessarily so, when the chief imperial virtue of *clementia* positively precludes any sense of equal partnership. So Susanna Braund recognizes, when she points out that the true balance of the friendship of Cinna and Augustus lies in the repeated displays of loyalty that Cinna will now need to offer his emperor (*debeas*) in response to the act of clemency granted once by Augustus (*dederim*).⁶

This sharp imbalance is laid bare on a grander scale too in Seneca's adoption of the bee society of Virgil's *Georgics* as a model, for such an image must reframe *populus* and *princeps* in explicitly monarchical terms, with Romans displaying their *fides* as slavish devotion to a king (*rex*).⁷ Indeed, Seneca makes perfectly clear his sense of the true nature of the *populus* at the very outset of the treatise, in language that runs perilously close to the lexicon of *servitium* and foreign subjugation: the *populus* is an unsettled mass in need of a yoke as constraint (*hanc immensam multitudinem discordem, seditiosam, impotentem, in perniciem alienam suamque pariter exultaturam, si hoc iugum fregerit*, "this enormous mass – quarrelsome, factious, out of control and likely to run riot to the destruction of others and itself equally, if it breaks this yoke," *De Clem.* 1.1.1; cf. 1.3.5).⁸ As elsewhere,

then, the Nero of *Octavia* is not in any simple sense rejecting the tenets of *De Clementia* in favour of tyrannical rule when he debates with his tutor in this *fabula praetexta*. Rather he is acknowledging the fundamental premise of the treaty – the superlative power of the *princeps* – before offering a creative misreading of that text to serve his own new theory of rule, and conceptualizing *fides* as a duty of absolute loyalty and obedience, that is to say a distinctly imperial *fides*, that derives from, rather than simply opposes, *De Clementia*.

Further rescripting of Seneca's theory of rule comes with Nero's striking counter-narrative of effective government based on the historical example of Julius Caesar and Augustus, closely following but inverting the argument of *De Clementia* to assert that unceasing *bellum civile* is the true lesson and legacy of Julian rule (*Oct.* 503–26; *De Clem.* 1.9–11):⁹

condidit tandem suos
iam fessus enses victor hebetatos feris
vulneribus, et continuit imperium metus.
armis fideque militis tutus fuit,
pietate nati factus eximia deus,
post fata consecratus et templis datus.

Nos quoque manebunt astra, si saevo prior
ense occuparo quidquid infestum est mihi
dignaque nostram subole fundaro domum.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 524–32)

At last the victor, now exhausted, sheathed his men's swords, blunted by savage blows: and fear sustained his authority. He was secure through the arms and *fides* of his army; made a god by the extraordinary piety of his son, he was deified after death and granted to our temples. The stars will remain for me too, if I attack first with savage sword whatever is hostile to me, and establish my home with worthy offspring.

Nero's theory of effective government – that is to say, his attempt to reify a new sense of *fides* – places no value in cultivating reciprocal ties of *fides* with the citizen community, or even of maintaining the pretence of such a relationship, but instead invests in a much more pragmatic form of *fides*: the loyalty of armed backing, the rule of fear, and dynastic successors.

Reading Resistance: Nero, the *Fides Militis*, and the *Vis Populi Romani*

Nero's debate with Seneca offers an articulation of his theory of effective rule, one based on dynastic security and *fides militis* rather than any traditional mutual relationship of *fides* with the citizen body. But of course the

events of the play itself offer concrete application of this vision, for they foreground his relationship with the citizen body and his engagement with his closest military supporters, thus playing out on-stage the crucial relationships identified by Seneca in *De Clementia*, the relationship with one's *populus* and one's soldiery. Nero's conversation with Seneca is immediately preceded and indeed motivated by a short exchange with an unnamed *Praefectus*, in which the emperor demands the heads of Plautus and Sulla with a peremptory *Perage imperata* ("Carry out my orders," *Oct.* 437). This phrase, as A.J. Boyle notes, constitutes defining language for Nero, for it recalls his previous order to kill his mother, Agrippina, carried out by his henchman Anicetus, the prefect of the fleet (*peragit iussa*, *Oct.* 366), and it anticipates his final command to another praetorian prefect, the banishment and execution of Octavia (*imperata perage*, *Oct.* 874).¹⁰ Once again, however, such a display of tyrannical mastery is twinned with a deep understanding of the social and ethical cognitive collateral of *fides*, as Nero shows in much more extended conversation with the praetorian prefect in the wake of the popular riots in support of Octavia (*Oct.* 820–75).

Before we turn to Act V and Nero's debate with the prefect, it is worth paying closer attention to the behaviour of the *populus* in this play, for, I will now argue, they have their own distinct interpretation of *fides* to offer, together with the political will to make their voice heard through violence. The *Octavia's* inclusion of a riot by Roman citizens has long been considered one of the play's most striking features, but the account of their disruptive behaviour as merely disorderly violence, framed by the messenger and the *Octavia's* second chorus (a pro-Poppaea group) as unhinged rage and madness (*furor*: 781, 785, 786, 793; *rabies*, 784), offers stereotypically elite commentary on the "mob" as a fickle, irrational, and unstable *vulgus*.¹¹ The use of such language within the play to characterize the *civium motus* (804) as the act of a "rabble" (as Nero himself labels the people, *turba*, 835) denies any deep sense of "political consciousness" to the people. Furthermore, as Lauren Ginsberg has recently shown, Nero, the messenger, and the second chorus are not just drawing on stereotypical mob attributes when they describe the riots of AD 62 but are also activating deep-set literary evocations of Rome's genetically predetermined propensity to civil war, above all via allusion to Horace's *Epodes* and Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, when they condemn the *rabies* and *furor* of the Roman people.¹²

Those set in opposition to the Roman *populus*, then – Nero, the soldier-messenger loyal to the emperor, the chorus of "courtiers" – are certainly cultivating a dominant *topos* of elite literature: a genetically predetermined addiction to self-slaughter. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, in a play that puts the struggle to script power, history, and the nature of

Roman identity centre-stage, this characterization of the Roman people is a tendentious one. To put the *Octavia* into the broader context that the first chorus itself demands, and drawing on the important recent work of Cyril Courrier on the Roman *plebs*, there is good reason to understand the plebeian voice – including its voice of violent protest – as absolutely and directly politically engaged in the early empire.¹³ Such disorder was clearly already recognized in Roman culture as part of an established system of discourse between *princeps* and people, with its own informal societal mores and unspoken restraints on the behaviour of both ruler and ruled.¹⁴ These unwritten rules were well understood and, in the main, adhered to: the consensus from the ancient sources is that rulers should try to avoid the use of force; if compelled to repress violence, they should use proportionate force; and they should not exact overly harsh punishment in the wake of civil unrest.¹⁵ The people, for their part, were keenly attuned to the power of symbolic violence, often wreaking destruction on those surrogate forms of imperial authority, the statues, portraits, and busts that crowded the imperial fora and temples of Rome, in lieu of or as a precursor to actual bodily harm.¹⁶

We should be open to the reading the violent actions of the *populus* in the *Octavia* as not mere mindless violence, or even an “ancestral curse,” then, but as an attempt to remind Nero of the societal contract between the emperor and the people, predicated not on a mindless taste for civil war but a sense of responsibility and partnership – the contract of *fides* – between ruled and ruler.¹⁷ After introducing themselves by lamenting their loss of political agency and the distance from the *vera virtus* of the republican past in the first choral ode (273–92), the *populus* reacts to Nero’s new marriage to Poppaea with a speech recalling the past *vis* of a people defined not just by military success but also by their contribution to making the laws of an invincible state (676–81): *dedit invictae leges patriae* (678). They then identify symbolic surrogates for their wrath – statues of Poppaea and Nero, and the palace of Nero itself – pledging to destroy them (683–9). Further information on the riots comes later in the form of a messenger-speech from the *nuntius*, the account of a praetorian guard who – despite characterizing the violence as “a frenzy” (*rabies*, 784) – reports to the courtiers that the people in fact have a very specific plan (*consilium*, 788): they mean to return Octavia to her rightful position and restore her due share of power (*debitam partem imperi*, 790).

This depiction of the rioting of AD 62 is presented as *bellum civile* after the fact by hostile witnesses, then, but at this point it could be argued that the *vis populi* is both carefully targeted and relatively restrained, engaging in political communication, not chaos. Furthermore, the *ignotus*’ choice to frame the protest as a shot across the bows, before regime change proper, is

strikingly different from Tacitus' account, which relates frequent and open outbreaks of violence *after* Octavia's exile and seems to posit the symbolic dismantling of Poppaea's statuary as an expression of hysterical joy that has arisen only *after* a false rumour that Octavia has been recalled from exile by Nero.¹⁸

inde crebri questus nec occulti per vulgum, cui minor sapientia <et> ex mediocritate fortunae pauciora pericula sunt. his ... tamquam Nero paenitentia flagitii coniugem revocarit Octaviam.

Exim laeti Capitolium scandunt deosque tandem venerantur. effigies Poppaeae proruunt, Octaviae imagines gestant umeris, spargunt floribus foroque ac templis statuunt. (Tac. *Ann.* 14.60–1)

The measure [sc. Octavia's exile] led to general and undisguised protests from the common people, endowed with less discretion than their superiors, and – thanks to their humble station – faced by fewer perils. <Then came a rumour> that Nero had repented of his outrage and recalled Octavia to his side.

At once exulting crowds scaled the Capitol, and Heaven at last found itself blessed. They hurled down the effigies of Poppaea, they carried the statues of Octavia shoulder-high, strewed them with flowers, raised them up in the forum and the temples.¹⁹

More important than his blatant disdain for the *vulgus* is Tacitus' overt disavowal of the people's agency, with the rioting presented as arising spontaneously as emotional response to a misunderstood fact, rather than as the pre-meditated and collective action of a *populus* trying to live up to a historical pattern of militaristic *virtus* that demands the overthrow of tyrannical rulers.²⁰ The striking choice of the unknown author to attribute this kind of political consciousness and republican historical memory so overtly to the people – regardless of the extent to which, in literary terms, this action may reflect a important *topos* of the republican *praetexta* – powerfully contextualizes the counter-argument to Nero's new ethos of rule. The toppling of statues is violence that asserts the right to a continuing dialogic relationship with *princeps*, reminds the emperor of the role of the *populus* in establishing and legitimating his rule; it does not feel bound by any sense of abject *fides* to endorse a change in dynasty that it neither agrees with nor will stomach.

Haec Est Fides? Nero's Kingdom of Cruelty

The conditions are set, then, in Nero's response to the riot, for a battle between differing versions of *fides*: Nero's vision of "extreme loyalty," which takes

inspiration from the tyranny of Senecan tragedy and creative misreading of *De Clementia*, and privileges unswerving military support over partnership with the citizen body; and the *populus*, whose civic disorder is no simple expression of discontent but advisory “steer” for a *princeps*, based on its right to speak to power, and its ancestral *virtus* in defeating unchecked tyranny. Mediating these incompatible visions of *fides* is the praetorian prefect who has repressed the riot and reports back to his emperor at the beginning of Act V.²¹ His conversation with the emperor serves as a crunch-test for the fate of Roman *fides*: a conversation that puts on the line the prefect’s own understanding of the *fides* he owes his commander and Rome, an understanding that – unfortunately for Octavia and the Roman state – will be found wanting.

Nero’s only soliloquy in the play begins with the ominous sentiment that death is too light a punishment for the crimes of the citizens, reveals his decision to execute Octavia, and suggests that the next step is to crush his “guilty people” (*noxium populum*, 832) with a fire. This last notion is not just a clear nod to the Great Fire of AD 64 (820–33)²² but also a sinister evocation of the nightmarish city-scape Seneca paints in *De Clementia* when he hypothesizes about the rule of an unchecked tyrant:

sed puta esse tutam crudelitatem, quale eius regnum est? non aliud quam captarum urbium forma et terribiles facies publici metus. omnia maesta, trepida, confusa; ... quod istud, di boni, malum est occidere, saevire, delectari sono catenarum et civium capita decidere, quocumque ventum est multum sanguinis fundere, aspectu suo terrere ac fugare! ... a singulorum deinde caedibus in exitia gentium serpit et inicere tectis ignem, aratrum vetustis urbibus inducere potentiam putat; et unum occidi iubere aut alterum parum imperatorium credit; nisi eodem tempore grex miserorum sub ictu stetit, crudelitatem suam in ordinem coactam putat. (Sen. *De Clem.* 1.26.2–4)

But suppose that cruelty were practised without risk – what is its kingdom like? It has precisely the appearance of captured cities and the alarming look of widespread terror. Grief and panic and confusion everywhere ... Good gods! What a curse that is, to kill, to rage, to enjoy the sound of chains and to cut off citizens’ heads, to spill blood abundantly wherever you go, to have people running scared from your appearance? ... Then, from the slaughter of individuals it creeps into genocide. It thinks it is real power to set fire to houses and to drive the plough over ancient cities. To give the order for one or two people’s deaths is not considered autocratic enough. Unless a whole herd of miserable people stands awaiting the blow at the same time, it thinks its cruelty has been reduced to the ordinary.

Nero’s final words, indeed, present a decoction of his new theory of rule, one that manages explicitly to recall Seneca’s work,²³ and to reprise that treatise’s

opening characterization of the Roman people as unsettled mass in need of a yoke as constraint (*De Clem* 1.1.1).²⁴ Now, however, Nero has rejected the role of student and is ready to teach: and the lesson is that his *populus* must obey (*parere discet*). Any attempt to make their feelings known, let alone impose their will, will be treated as the rebellious uprising of a foreign enemy, requiring domination (*domanda*), suppression (*premenda*), and even – echoing *De Clementia* again – outright breaking (*fracta*; cf. *fregerit*, *De Clem.* 1.1.1).²⁵

Exultat ingens saeculi nostri bonis
corrupta turba nec capit clementiam
ingrata nostram, ferre nec pacem potest,
sed inquieta rapitur hinc audacia,
hinc temeritate fertur in praeceps sua.
malis domanda est et gravi semper iugo
premenda, ne quid simile temptare audeat
contraque sanctos coniugis vultus meae
attollere oculos. fracta per poenas metu
parere discet principis nutu sui.

([Sen.] *Oct.* 834–43)

This great rabble, corrupted by the benefits of my age, lives riotously: nor, in its thanklessness, does it understand my clemency, nor can it tolerate peace; but it is carried away by a restless daring, and by its own temerity is borne headlong. They must be tamed by hurt, bowed down by an ever-heavy yoke, lest they dare to try something like this again or raise their eyes to look at the inviolate face of my wife. Broken by fear through punishment, the mob will learn to obey the nod of their *princeps*.

Still, Nero is well aware that *fides* will even now be crucial in executing this philosophy of rule. As the praetorian prefect enters, he indeed is pointedly reminded of his qualifications (*Sed adesse cerno rara quem pietas virum/fidesque castris nota praeposuit meis*, “But I see the man approaching, whose rare piety and *fides* have made commander of my guard,” *Oct.* 844–5): a greeting that is not, as the commentators tend to assume, merely part of the stock characterization of ideal *satelles*, but the first step in securing bloodshed and terror as new societal status quo.²⁶ The opening exchange shows that the prefect is still working on an old imperial “*fides*-model,” one that follows the ideological template of doing as little harm as possible to the citizen body, and reports the killing of a few “hothead” agitators, and the leaders of the uprising.²⁷ In response, Nero does not just appropriate the “rhetoric of amplification” of Senecan tragedy, asking “Is this enough?” (*et hoc sat est?* 848)

and demanding revenge (*vindicta*, 849), the kind of punishment (*poena*) no age will forget (855–7).²⁸ He also reminds his subordinate of their respective roles in imperial society (“Is this how you, a soldier, understood your commander?” *sic miles audisti ducem?* 848), evoking thereby the strong bond of loyalty owed by a soldier to his superior officer, one that in turn guarantees the legitimacy of his general. Focusing his anger on the temerity of the crowd in presuming to “give laws to their *princeps*” (*principi legem dare*, 852), Nero pointedly refutes the *populus*’ proud memory of their own republican past (*dedit ... leges patriae*, 676) but is alert to their potent danger. Before, the *vis populi Romani* tamed foreign peoples and captured kings (680–1): now, when they focus their attention on the imperial *thalamus*, symbolically dragging the lifelike statues of Poppaea from her bed (*similes nimium vultus dominae / ipsamque toris detrahat altis*, 686–7) in order to keep faith with the legitimate imperial *domus*, Nero understands that the risk to his new wife is all too real (*abstrahere nostris coniugem caram toris*, 854).²⁹

Nero then exerts further pressure on his prefect, appropriating the alienating discourse of foreign enemy (*hostis*), not just for his citizens, but also for his own sister-wife Octavia. The prefect, who has already cavilled at the wholesale destruction of the Roman people, must now countenance the execution of an enemy of the state, whose guilt is now asserted not, as Tacitus records, by (trumped up) charges of adultery (*Ann.* 14.60–2), but by the “people’s *furor*”:

NERO.	Parere dubitas?
PRAEFECTVS.	Cur meam damnas fidem?
NERO.	Quod parcis hosti.
PRAEFECTVS.	Femina hoc nomen capit?
NERO.	Si scelera cepit.
PRAEFECTVS.	Estne qui sontem arguat?
NERO.	Populi furor. ([Sen.] <i>Oct.</i> 863–6)
NERO.	You hesitate to obey?
PREFECT.	Why do you discredit my <i>fides</i> ?
NERO.	Because you spare my enemy.
PREFECT.	Can a woman have this name?
NERO.	If she has committed crimes.
PREFECT.	And who is it that proves her guilty?
NERO.	The fury of the people.

Such an audacious re-characterization of the legitimate heir of Claudius, one that once again draws on the civil war past, the freighted language and

example of the Julio-Claudian family in packaging *bellum civile* as foreign war, neatly remakes both the Roman people and Octavia the prefect's "rightful" enemy. At the same time, it collapses distinctions between cause and effect, making the dissent of the *populus* both cause and proof of her "treachery," and guarantees the conditions for the final implosion of the Roman state.³⁰ Seneca, in his treatment of the cruel tyrant of *De Clementia*, had predicted that such conditions would finally provoke rebellion from those closest to him, deploying, as Braund notes, *perfidia* and *impietas* for the only time in the treatise to mark the complete inversion of the ideal relationship between ruler and ruled.³¹

tyrannorum gentes populi que et quorum erat malum et ei quibus imminerebat excindere adgressi sunt. aliquando sua praesidia in ipsos consurrexerunt perfidiamque et impietatem et feritatem et quidquid ab illis didicerant in ipsos exercuerunt. quid enim potest quisquam ab eo sperare quem malum esse docuit? non diu nequitia adparet nec quantum iubetur peccat. (*De Clem.* 1.26.1)

The cruelty of tyrants has been the target of destruction by nations and peoples, both those experiencing the suffering and those feeling its threat. Sometimes tyrants' own guards have risen up against them and have practised on them the treachery and disloyalty and brutality and anything else they had learned from them. After all, what can anyone hope for from the person he has taught to be evil? Wickedness is not subordinate for long and it does not do wrong simply according to orders.

Once again, however, Nero "proves" Seneca misguided. The prefect, moderate, measured, and loyal to his commander but also cognizant of the demands that *fides* places on the emperor's relationship with his citizens, has the chance to act here, but does nothing. Apparently *nequitia* does obey Nero, and the prefect's lack of resistance confirms that the dystopian city of Seneca's nightmare – a *regnum crudelitatis* – is the reality of the imperial city under Nero. Of course, one day Nero will himself be formally declared *hostis* by the senate (Suet. *Nero* 49.2), and, right to the end, he will "trust" the loyalty of his soldiers. According to Suetonius, at least, already on the point of death, and unaware that he was receiving only the *semblance* of help from the centurion who had rushed to staunch his wound, his final words were *haec est fides* ("this is loyalty," *Nero* 49.4). Nero will eventually be brought down, but not by the people, not by this prefect, and not by his sister-wife, Octavia. In his eyes at least, his own concept of *fides* wins out, even at the end.

Fides after the Fact

Fides is clearly crucial in the *ignotus*' analysis of what went wrong for Neronian Rome in the *Octavia*. There is a chance for *fides*, both personal and political, to be restored in the wake of the civil wars of 69, for the goddess *Fides* to return in the new Golden Age anticipated by Seneca as he laments the final stages of a universe in the grip of corruption (*Oct.* 398), and for *fides* for the first time to be incorporated into the imperial value system.³² Certainly the Flavians would make much of their peculiarly strong bond of *fides* with their soldiery, immediately embark on a symbolic expression of a return to peace with the construction of the *Templum Pacis*, and express a highly public commitment to restoring Rome to the people, in the overbuilding of the site of Nero's palace with the "people's amphitheatre," the Colosseum, a structure that would be completed after Vespasian's death by his son Titus.³³

At the same time, there is little sense of optimism for *fides* in the play itself. The final instantiation of *fides* we are permitted to see – the example of Octavia herself, lamented by the chorus of Roman citizens at the end of the play – seems calculated to show how *fides* has not only been trampled on by Nero but also made to look dirty in a way that occludes, rather than reinforces, the distance between "then" and "now." In lines that immediately follow Nero's instructions to banish Octavia, the chorus returns to reflect. Revolutionary fervour, the will to communicate, a commitment to the possibility of the kind of creative, constitutive violence of the past – the violence provoked by the examples of Lucretia and Verginia in the early days of the republic – is now not an option. Instead, lamenting the acclamation of the people (*favor populi*) as "detestable and deadly to many" (*o funestus multis populi/dirusque favor*, *Oct.* 877–8) it looks to examples from more recent history, the radical and revolutionary tribunes of the people, the Gracchi and Titus Drusus:

Flevit Gracchos miseranda parens,
perdidit ingens quos plebis amor
nimiusque favor,
genere illustres, pietate fide
lingua claros,
pectore fortes, legibus acres.
Te quoque, Livi,
simili leto Fortuna dedit,
quem neque fasces texere sui
nec tecta domus.

Plura referre
 prohibet praesens exempla dolor.
 modo cui patriam reddere cives
 aulam et fratris voluere toros,
 nunc ad poenam letumque trahi
 flentem miseram cernere possunt. ([Sen.] *Oct.* 881–95)

Their wretched mother wept for the Gracchi, whom the great love of the plebs and excessive acclamation destroyed: famed in birth, in piety, *fides* and speech they were outstanding; brave of heart, they were passionate in their laws. You too, Livius, Fortune granted a similar death, whom neither the *fascēs* nor own home protected. Our present grief prevents the relation of more examples. The citizens wanted to give her back her father's palace and brother's bed: now they can see her weeping, poor wretch, dragged off to punishment and death.

In a provocative reading that collapses the choruses of the *Octavia* to read the final ode as the voice of one citizenry, Lauren Ginsberg argues that these lines reveal the implication of the people in Rome's crimes, their "dangerous agency" and partial complicity in the social conflict that has dogged Rome since its defeat of Carthage and destruction of a true foreign enemy.³⁴ Such a flattening out of difference is tempting, particularly given the efforts the play itself has made to elide differences, to double and foreshadow, to stress the repetition of historical patterns and the shared nature of individual fates within the *domus Augusta*. Certainly the very last line of the play – "Rome rejoices in citizen-blood" – does not seem calculated to stress the break between "then" and "now" (*civis gaudet Roma cruore*, 982), and Ginsberg's willingness to implicate the *populus* in the criminal bloodshed of Rome does it the service of granting an agency that contemporary elite narratives, writing the mob as the hysterical instrument of demagogic politicians, do not.

Even so, it seems to me that there are hints within the final choral ode that the Roman people themselves, while ready to take on the blame for their own failures, are not ready to admit the full entropy of Rome. When the chorus condemns itself for its fickleness and attributes its actions to *favor* not *fides*, it clearly does appropriate for itself the pejorative register with which it was condemned earlier in the play, "accepts" the guilt for Octavia's impending doom, and points to the problem of its own contaminating factionalism. At the same time, however, it strikingly protests the continued legitimacy of the examples of virtue it continues to celebrate, in the shape of the radical tribunes the Gracchi and Livius Drusus. As it does so, it both absorbs an elitist narrative that condemns the tribunes as rabble-rousing

populists, using the plebs to their own ends in an internal struggle for power at Rome, and rejects it, stressing its own interpretation of their worth and continuing to attribute to the Gracchi the values it had boasted for itself in the first choral ode of the play: a virtuous lineage, great personal qualities (*pietas* and *fides*), and, perhaps most importantly, the holding of legitimate legal power (the Gracchi are marked out as “passionate in their laws” *legibus acres*, and Drusus as a holder of the *fasces*, symbol of a Roman magistrate’s power).³⁵ In other words, even as they blame themselves for the failure of their insurgency and Octavia’s *poena*, the chorus *continues* to contest, in the face of the almost relentless pressure encoded allusively, by historical patterning, and by the pervasive symmetries of the play, the “flattening” narrative that admits no real difference between the winners and the losers in this play and in Roman history.

Indeed, the chorus’ praise of the radical tribunes at the end of the *Octavia* may force us to take a closer look at the way our literary sources, in even the most “typical” elite imperial accounts, may still show some trace of a counter-elitist “insurgency” narrative. Valerius Maximus offers perhaps the best example in his treatment of the death of Tiberius Gracchus. Excising the *context* of Tiberius’ death, Valerius instead praises the singular virtue of Scipio Nasica, who inspired the senate to take action against a man who had “subjugated” the Roman state through his use of the *favor populi* via bribery, who was threatening to hand over full power to the people (3.2.17), and who, along with his “criminal faction,” fully deserved the death penalty:³⁶

cum Ti. Gracchus in tribunatu, profusissimis largitionibus favore populi occupato, rem publicam oppressam teneret, palamque dictitaret interempto senatu omnia per plebem agi debere, in aedem Fidei Publicae convocati patres conscripti a consule Mucio Scaevola quidnam in tali tempestate faciendum esset deliberabant, cunctisque consentibus ut consul armis rem publicam tueretur, Scaevola negavit se quicquam vi esse acturum. tum Scipio Nasica, “quoniam” inquit “consul, dum iuris ordinem sequitur, id agit ut cum omnibus legibus Romanum imperium corruat, egomet me privatus voluntati vestrae ducem offero,” ac deinde laevam manum <im>a parte togae circumdedit, sublataque dextra proclamavit ‘qui rem publicam salvam esse volunt me sequantur,’ eaque voce cunctatione bonorum civium discussa, Gracchum cum scelerata factione quas merebatur poenas persolvere coegit. (Val. Max. 3.2.17).

Ti. Gracchus in his Tribunate had captured popular favour by profuse largesses and held the commonwealth under his thumb. He said often and openly that the senate should be killed and everything handled through the commons. The Conscript Fathers were called together by Consul Mucius Scaevola in the temple of Public Faith

and were deliberating on what should be done in such a crisis. Everybody thought the Consul should protect the commonwealth by armed force, but Scaevola refused to take any violent action. Then spoke Scipio Nasica: "Since the Consul, following legal process, is for letting the Roman empire collapse along with all the laws, I offer myself as a private individual to lead your will." Then he wrapped the hem of his gown around his left hand and raised his right, shouting, "Let those who want to save the commonwealth follow me." With that call he dissipated the hesitation of good citizens and made Gracchus and his criminal supporters pay the penalty they deserved.

Even within this eulogy for Scipio, however, obvious traces of a counter-narrative remain. When Nasica accuses Scaevola of imperilling the Roman state by refusing the extrajudicial killing of Tiberius, he admits that the consul is following the law. Nasica wraps the hem of his toga in his left hand – an action that has been interpreted as an adoption of the *cinctus Gabinus*, symbolically making him a priest about to undertake a ritual sacrifice, and alluding to the authority invested in him as *pontifex maximus* – but by his own admission Nasica is acting here as a *privatus*. And clearly, while the decision to place the senate in the Temple of Fides to debate this issue, before Nasica leads his contingent to the Capitol, is highly symbolic, it is also susceptible to counter-interpretation.³⁷ Jerzy Linderski, for example, argues that Nasica's progress from the Temple evokes solemn ritual: Tiberius was being consecrated to the wrath of the gods by Nasica. But Anna Clark points out that the description of Nasica's behaviour – a reversal of the ritual set down by Numa – could also be interpreted as an offence *against* Fides, a first indication of the blow to *fides* and further deterioration of political stability marked by Tiberius' death.³⁸

The jagged edges around the accounts, even such overtly pro-optimate accounts, of failed populist revolution, are activated then in the chorus' tenacious wish to continue to regard the Gracchi and Drusus as examples of *pietas* and *fides*. This value-category still means something to them. Unfortunately, however, as the chorus will itself go on to show when it reels off a further list of historical *exempla* – a catalogue of imperial women who have suffered exile and death (931–57) – the broader story of Roman identity politics, one in which the progress of the nation is built from a series of female deaths, in a pattern of constructive and constitutive violence, has yielded to a lack of action as imperial woman after imperial woman has been excised from the plot of Roman history with no resistance or response.³⁹ Octavia, for her part, fears that she may be a *causa malorum* (650), activating a powerful leitmotif of Roman progress: the kind of gendered death that time and again has set the Roman social order back on track.⁴⁰ But she too recognizes that her death now will be no inspirational spark for change but

will merely accelerate the tyrannical “Death-stiny” Nero has planned for the Roman *populus*.

There is something poignant, then, in this chorus’ final acquiescence to an “aristocratic sociology of social conflict,” as Myles Lavan puts it, when, in the wake of its failure, it re-labels its *fides* to Octavia as *favor* and attributes *fides* only now to the safely dead.⁴¹ The value intended to mitigate the most competitive and aggressive tendencies of people and factions with different priorities has been exposed within the *Octavia* as susceptible to hijacking by vested interests, not just within a tyrannical, or even a “civil war” narrative, but also, potentially, throughout Roman history. Accepted divisions and secure turning points in the strongest and most standard teleology of Roman history – the republican one that separates the “positive” revolutionary spirit of the early republic from the damaging, inward-turning turmoil after the fall of Carthage – may begin to look shaky when *fides* is put under such an exacting pressure and brought into such close proximity to an imperial Neronian narrative that blazons its ability to conform meaning to its purpose. It will indeed take an act of faith, after seeing the *Octavia*’s appeal to and collapse of the trajectory of *fides* within a Roman historical pattern, to believe that a new cycle of history can begin, that Fides can return, and that a new, Flavian imperial order may re-legitimate the balance, dialogue, and reciprocity that are held up as fundamental Roman ideals. The question that the *Octavia* poses to an audience alert to its deconstruction of *fides*, today, as at the time of its composition, is, in the end, a typically double-edged one. In a Flavian context proclaiming the return of *fides*, a new beginning for Rome, and a return to a legitimate relationship between *princeps* and people, the play that condemns the last Julio-Claudian to history as tyrant and monster also has the clear vision to show not just how badly *fides* has been compromised, but to hint that the *vera virtus* on which Roman identity is based, its famous appeal to *fides* as national value, is just a story. Surely after the violence of AD 68–9, no member of the *populus* witnessing the arrival of a new Flavian ruling *gens*, and seeing its legitimacy secured by the loyalty of its army, could be naive enough to believe that *vera virtus* had returned to Rome, or that the power to determine *fides* rested anywhere other than in the *princeps*’ hands.

NOTES

- 1 I use the edition of Boyle 2008 throughout; translations are my own.
- 2 Morgan 2015: 1–175 provides an excellent synthesis and overview of *fides* in the early principate, as part of a larger study of the language of faith in the New Testament.

- 3 For readings of *Thyestes* as already a “training-manual” or “mirror for the Prince” for Nero, see Calder 1983 and Schwazer 2016.
- 4 This is not to say that Atreus’ totalizing rule, and the scope of *Thyestes* more broadly, is not also clearly speaking to a Roman vision for rule: on this, see most recently Boyle 2017: 183–5. For other obvious resonances of *Thyestes* in this passage, see Manuwald 2003; Ferri 2003: 254–63; Boyle 2008: 188–91; and Buckley 2013b.
- 5 See Braund 2009, esp. 195–219, 258–79, 306–10, 374–80. I use her text and translation for all references to *De Clementia*.
- 6 Braund 2009: 278.
- 7 Braund 2009: 214–15 hits the nail on the head: “Seneca shifts ... from his concern to establish the reciprocity or mutuality of the relationship between the ruler and his people ... to a blunt assertion of the necessity of the people’s submission to the ruler’s absolute power.”
- 8 *iugum OLD* s.v. 2a and 2b. Braund 2009: 215 notes the unusual collocation with *frangere*, “to break,” also a verb of suppression used in conquest/slave narratives; see Lavan 2013: 55–7.
- 9 Cf. Buckley 2013b; independently Ginsberg 2013, developed in Ginsberg 2017: 89–114.
- 10 Boyle 2008: 167.
- 11 On the riot in the *Octavia* and its treatment of the *populus*, see Kragelund 1982: 38–52 (stressing the striking “idealization” of the *populus* in the *Octavia*, and arguing that this framing of the people fits particularly well with the propaganda of Galba or the early years of Vespasian); Courrier 2016, an in-depth study of the symbolism of the crowd’s interaction with the material culture and space of Rome in order to express their political grievances; and Ginsberg 2017: 115–52, who traces the *Octavia*’s intertextual relationships with Augustan and Neronian literature to frame the riot and Nero’s response not just as *bellum civile*, but as a civil war potentially as threatening to the state as the wars that destroyed the republic, in which the people themselves are implicated as blameworthy.
- 12 See, e.g., Lucan’s programmatic association of Romans, civil war, and *furor* at the outset of *Bellum Civile*: *quis furor, o cives* ... (“What madness is this, citizens?” 1.8), and Horace’s *Epode* 7, which identifies *furor* and civil war as the “bitter destiny” of the Romans. Ginsberg 2017: 115–41 provides discussion of both texts in the *Octavia*, in order, she argues, to reflect the true nature of the Roman *populus*: as violent and inclined to civil war as its *princeps* (“by ... echoing previous civil war literature, the Messenger and the chorus demonstrate that Nero’s belief in a seditious riot is not merely part and parcel of a tyrant’s irrational paranoia but is in fact reflective of an awareness of the true character of the Roman people,” 134).

- 13 Courrier 2014, esp. 605–733, part of a much greater chronological survey of plebeian identity. For the ideological framing of rebellion in the Roman Empire and its elitist linguistic tropes, see Lavan 2017; for attention to the importance of political ideology and the role of the *populus* in the Roman republic, together with critique of an “ideological vacuum” in scholarship on Roman history, see Wiseman 2009: 5–32.
- 14 See Aldrete 2013, who offers an overview of the changing context of urban violence from the republic to the early empire and stresses the role of the urban *plebs* in using civil unrest to express opinions about political appointments and the imperial succession. Aldrete concludes that “riots appear to have served a useful function in ancient Rome as a tacitly allowed informal institution for popular expression, and thus constituted a form of communication that was acknowledged by both ruler and ruled” (439). Kelly 2007 stresses the extent to which emperors of the early principate were reluctant to suppress rioting with military force, largely on the grounds of an ideology of rule based on moderation and euergetism.
- 15 Kelly 2007, noting the *Octavia* as a key example at 164.
- 16 Aldrete 2013: 431–2. Courrier 2016 offers a fine in-depth case study of the symbolic violence done to statues after the Poppaea-Nero marriage, offering a comparative account of Tacitus’ and the *Octavia*’s depiction of the riots that pays close attention to the crowd’s interaction with the material culture and topography of Rome.
- 17 Or as Kragelund 1982: 40 well puts it, “[t]he revolt is ... an attempt of the once sovereign *populus* to prove itself worthy of its republican ancestors. The vindication of their just demand – Octavia’s reinstatement – would also be the vindication of their right to have a say in matters.” For a bold new reading that collapses surface distinctions between the two choruses and implicates the *populus* as a whole in the civil strife in the *Octavia*, see Ginsberg 2017: 115–80.
- 18 While the lacuna at the end of *Ann.* 14.60 makes interpretation difficult, commentators and translators generally agree that the report the people receive of Nero’s recall of the *Octavia* must be false: see, e.g., Furneaux 1896–1906: 306; Woodcock 2001: 148; Woodman 2004; and Damon 2012.
- 19 I use the edition of Fisher 1906 for Tacitus: the translation is Jackson 1989.
- 20 Cf. Ferri 2003: 316–18 (though Ferri does not assign political motivation to the actions of this crowd, and reads the presence of this scene as, rather, inspired in a literary sense by the episodes of public insurrection that undoubtedly featured in republican *fabulae praetextae*). Boyle 2008: 234 notes that the rioting in this play “is much more revolutionary and politically focused than the ‘frequent and unconcealed’ protests (*crebri questus nec occulti*, *Ann.* 14.60.4) mentioned by Tacitus.” Courrier 2016: 304 notes that the description of the dismemberment of the statues in the *Octavia* recalls a traditional republican image of the

condemned being dragged through the city, but also argues (331–3) that the route the *vulgus* takes in Tacitus is topographically evocative and designed to prompt more recent historical memory in the shape of the fates of two unpopular figures of the recent imperial age, Piso and Sejanus, thus elevating the collective action of the *plebs* to the status of ritual.

- 21 Nero had appointed two praetorian prefects in AD 62: Ofonius Tigellinus, on record as encouraging the execution of Plautus and Sulla, and Faenius Rufus, according to Tacitus less sinister in character than Tigellinus, and instead remarkable for his popularity with the people as a result of his previous position as *praefectus annonae* (*Ann.* 14.51). Given that the *Octavia* is obsessed with duality and mirror figures, it seems most plausible to me that the first prefect of the play, who sped to execute Nero's kinsmen, is Tigellinus, while the prefect of this act, who protests his orders, is Faenius Rufus. However, Ferri 2003: 249 and Boyle 2008: 181 rightly point out that the *ignotus* deliberately avoids explicit identification of these figures and is unclear about whether this character is the same praetorian prefect who did Nero's bidding without demur earlier in the play. See also Ferri 2003: 369; Boyle 2008: 89–90. At 267, Boyle notes that Nero's identification of the prefect as "the man I have put in charge of my praetorian barracks" (844–5) may imply a different figure. Kragelund 1988 offers a different perspective, arguing that the prefect here is Tigellinus. On the *Octavia*'s obsession with repetition, symmetry, and the doubling of characters and scenes, see Kragelund 1982: 55–7; Boyle 2008: lx; and Bexley 2017. On the connections between the Nero-Seneca and Nero-Prefect scenes in particular, see Kragelund 1988: 492–5.
- 22 Cf. Ferri 2003: 363.
- 23 *De Clementia* ends seven chapters into its second book and is more than 8,000 words long: Seneca probably intended a three-book treatise. See Braund 2009: 45–7.
- 24 As Boyle 2008: 265 notes; cf. Manuwald 2002: 114–16.
- 25 Braund 2009: 158 sees no critique of imperial rule in Seneca's political image of the *iugum*, although she notes that the yoke image is more commonly used with reference to foreign peoples. Lavan 2013: 83–5 stresses the connection between the language of Roman domination of foreign peoples (including *domare*, *frangere*) and slavery, and notes (92) that *premere* is often explicitly twinned with slavery and foreign conquest, including in Jupiter's programmatic promise of mastery over foreign peoples in the *Aeneid* (1.281–5).
- 26 Cf. Ferri 2003: 369. Boyle 2008: 267 notes the importance of *pietas* and *fides* as leitmotifs in the *Octavia*, and links these virtues with the devotion and loyalty of the nurses to Octavia and Poppaea.
- 27 "I report that the rage of the people has been suppressed by the killing of the few who rashly made a stand for a long time" (*Populi furorem caede paucorum, diu / qui restiterunt temere, compressum affero*, 846–7); "the wicked leaders of the rebellion fell to the sword" (*Cecidere motus impii ferro duces*, 850).

- 28 See e.g., Boyle 2008: 267–8.
- 29 Cf. Ginsberg in this volume. For broader reflection incorporating scholarship on the overlapping domestic and political language of *fides* and *concordia*, see Caston 2012.
- 30 On the propensity for both sides in the civil conflict up to Actium to package the enemy as *hostis*, see Jal 1963: 77–8; on Julius Caesar’s particular success in such “alienating” ideology, see Roller 2001, esp. 54–63.
- 31 Braund 2009: 375.
- 32 *Fides* is first adopted as a ruler’s virtue in the contest for succession after Nero’s death: see Wallace-Hadrill 1981. Kragelund 1982 argues that the numismatic evidence and the association of *libertas* and popular appeal to the people probably date the play to the reign of Galba (and cf. Wiseman 2004: 264–5 and Flower 2006: 202–9 for further speculation on performance dates before the Flavian accession.) While these readings are plausible and thought provoking, they do not preclude a Flavian context for the play, and Boyle 2008 and Ginsberg 2017 have persuasive arguments for an early Flavian setting.
- 33 On the Flavians and their bonds of loyalty with their armies, see Bartera in this volume.
- 34 See Ginsberg 2017: 161–80, arguing “that it is not some overarching and celebratory Roman identity that connects them with the Roman people of the past, but rather the basest of Roman vices: the people’s predilection for strife (*furor*) and partisan politics (*favor*)” (163).
- 35 Cf. esp. Boyle 2008: 275, who notes that, in this characterization of the Gracchi, the author of the *Octavia* is transforming “from pejorative to ameliorative” the depiction of the Gracchi in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* (6.795–6). See Ginsberg 2017: 161–7 for a different reading that stresses the “dangerous agency” of the people and their complicity in (all) Roman civil conflict.
- 36 Text and translation are from Shackleton-Bailey 2000.
- 37 Only Valerius Maximus and Velleius record this detail.
- 38 Linderski 2002; Clark 2007b. For a helpful overview of the literary sources on the death of Tiberius and modern efforts to decode Nasica’s action (with explanations encompassing a complete lack of meditation to carefully plotted murder to safeguard the optimate interest), see Santangelo 2007: 485. Hodgson 2017: 65–76 untangles the sources and rightly warns against trying to form a “composite” story from the various accounts of Tiberius’ death.
- 39 On the death of the female as stimulus to the progression of Rome outside of epic, see especially. Joshel 1992 on Livy.
- 40 On Octavia’s pointed reminiscence of Dido, *malorum causa* (A. 4.170) see Ginsberg 2017: 54. For Dido’s part in a broader narrative of female death to engender Roman order, see Keith 2000: 115.
- 41 Lavan 2017: 31.

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PART IV

Revisiting Flavian *Fides*

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Flavian *Fides* in Tacitus' *Histories*

SALVADOR BARTERA

In the surviving books of Tacitus' *Histories*, particularly Books 1–3, the dominant narrative motif is the destructive nature of civil war.¹ After Vespasian re-established order, the Flavian dynasty tried to legitimize its rule by emulating the Augustan model, for it was essential to restore tradition in order to erase the memory of civil conflict.² One of the qualities that the Flavians appear to have emphasized was *fides*, particularly military *fides*. The concept of *fides* was evidently lost during the civil wars, but, before the new dynasty purported to bring it back, *fides* was also the subject of tendentious appropriation, especially during the brief rules of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, when *fides* seems to be superseded by its opposite, *perfidia*.³ Tacitus, as I will show, appears to reflect the Flavians' concern with *fides*, which is strikingly present in the first three books of the *Histories*, almost always at key narrative moments. While in Book 1, Tacitus emphasizes the loss of traditional *fides* as the power shifts from Galba to Otho and Vitellius, it becomes evident that, as Vitellius gains control, *fides* has been completely lost, while *perfidia*, which is particularly associated with the Vitellians, reaches its climax. Vitellius' betrayal in Book 3, followed by the burning of the Capitol, exemplifies this "destructive" shift. In this general climate of degeneration and subversion of traditional values, the Tacitean narrative is very careful not to include the Flavians, whose darker moments are often blamed on their generals rather than the future rulers. As Book 3 comes to an end, the Flavians appear as restorers of traditional *fides*, and therefore as legitimate heirs of Rome.

Fides Militaris

The type of *fides* that is particularly under scrutiny in the wartorn *Histories* is obviously military *fides*, which can be rendered as "loyalty, allegiance." As

has been observed in the Introduction to this volume, this is just one of the wide range of meanings of *fides* in Roman culture, developing from a religious context to extend to the political sphere and diplomatic and military relationships (e.g., in Caesar, Sallust, and Livy). *Fides* was also at the basis of the patron-client relationship,⁴ which served as the model for the special relationship that existed, in the republican period especially, between the general and his soldiers, and, during the empire, between the emperor and his subjects. Although this type of *fides* evidently was more markedly military, it nevertheless represented the natural evolution from, and was dependent on, the original concept of *fides*. In the context of civil wars, when the army's loyalty wavers among different contenders, *fides* is no longer to Rome but to an individual. After the end of the civil wars, the new ruler needed to re-establish Rome's traditional values, *fides* among them. It is for this reason, as I shall show, that the Flavians emphasized this concept in their propaganda.

Fides Militaris in the Histories

In the *Histories*, especially when compared to the *Annals*, a much longer work, *fides* and its cognates appear at a remarkable incidence.⁵ The noun *fides* occurs seventy-seven times, a strikingly high number, with a noticeably higher incidence in the first three books.⁶ Its opposite, *perfidia*,⁷ occurs twenty times, with a conspicuous increase in Book 3, the climactic book of the work's civil-war narrative. As regards the adjectival forms, Tacitus shows a marked preference for the archaizing *fidus*, which occurs forty-six times (twenty-three in the *Histories*);⁸ *fidelis* occurs only once (15.67.2).⁹ Its opposite, *infidus*, occurs seven times.¹⁰ *Perfidus* and *perfidiosus* are even rarer. Two things stand out: first, the overall number of occurrences of *fides* and its cognates; second, the visible presence of *fides* in the first three books, its gradual (albeit small) decline in Book 3, and, by contrast, the emergence of *perfidia*, which peaks in Book 3. Is this mere coincidence?

Fides, unlike, for example, *pietas* or *pax*, is usually not counted among the traditional imperial virtues.¹¹ Its first appearance on coins dates from the period of the civil wars of AD 68–9, but it was especially under the Flavians, as the numismatic evidence shows, that *fides* became a key concept of imperial propaganda. This represented an innovation, for *fides* never occurs on coins of the Julio-Claudian period.¹² There are a few coins featuring clasped hands (a traditional iconographical representation of *fides*) dating from the late republican era, but these types are rare: they portray a conquered land as a faithful partner to Rome, and the word *fides* appears, apparently, on one coin only, dating from 48–7 BC.¹³ From the time of the civil wars, however, the *fides*-type coin becomes frequent: several denarii, all minted in Gaul in

the years AD 68–9, display *fides* (mostly *f. exercituum*), along with *concordia praetorianorum* or *provinciarum* and clasped right hands (but no names of generals).¹⁴ Galba is the first to mint *fides publica*;¹⁵ Vitellius has many examples of *f. exercituum* with clasped hands, and one example of *f. praetorianorum*;¹⁶ *f. exercituum* with clasped hands occurs also with Vespasian,¹⁷ but much more common is *f. publica*, mostly with clasped hands.¹⁸ Titus and Domitian have *f. publica* exclusively.¹⁹ *Fides* also continues to appear after the Flavians, most prominently under Hadrian.

If the overall occurrences of *fides* in *Histories* 1–3 are noticeable (sixty-one times), what is striking is that more than half – thirty-seven, according to Fromchuck – refer to *fides militaris*.²⁰ Not all of these are equally significant, but the selection of passages I will discuss shows that Tacitus is particularly concerned with this concept – and with its opposite, *perfidia*. What emerges is that, as the narrative progresses, *fides* is used increasingly to emphasize its actual disappearance, while *perfidia*, which is associated mostly with Vitellius and his party, acquires more power. Thus *fides* provides a commentary, as it were, on the corrupting, and corrupted, nature of the civil wars, of which *fides*, at least in its military application, was a victim. As we will see, the Flavians, to a great extent, avoid being part of this process of the degeneration of *fides*. Indeed, they appear as restorers of the traditional type. Whether this implies that Tacitus followed Flavian propaganda is another question.

Book 1

At the end of the section on the “state of the empire,” Tacitus concludes with one of his wry *sententiae*, remarking that what kept the situation from imploding was the physical distance among the various legions:

sed longis spatiis discreti exercitus, quod saluberrimum est ad continendam militarem fidem, nec vitiis nec viribus miscebantur.²¹ (Tac. *Hist.* 1.9.3)

But separated as these armies were by long distances, a thing of all others the most favorable for keeping military loyalty, they could neither communicate their vices, nor combine their strength.

Such a statement contradicts the official propaganda, which, as it emerges from numismatic evidence, tried to advertise *fides* and *concordia exercituum*. The instability of *fides militaris*, which Galba had tried to restore, became apparent as soon as the German legions pledged their allegiance to Otho:

Infecit ea tabes legionum quoque et auxiliorum motas iam mentes, postquam vulgatum erat labare Germanici exercitus fidem. (Tac. *Hist.* 1.26.1)

The contagion spread to the legions and the auxiliary troops, already excited by the news of the wavering loyalty of the army of Germany.

Galba, the first emperor to mint coins of the *fides* type, is the first victim of the absence of *fides*.²² He had never truly enjoyed the loyalty of the army. And, perhaps significantly, Tacitus never uses the phrase *fides exercituum* (*vel sim.*) in reference to Galba, except for Otho's speech to the praetorian guard, in which Otho recalls the failure of Galba's duty to those who had pledged allegiance to him:

horror animum subit, quotiens recordor feralem introitum et hanc solam Galbae victoriam, cum in oculis urbis decimari deditos iuberet, quos deprecantes in fidem acceperat.²³ (Tac. *Hist.* 1.37.3)

A shudder comes over my soul, whenever I call to mind that ghastly entry, Galba's solitary victory, when, before the eyes of the capital he gave orders to decimate the prisoners, those who had pleaded for mercy and those whom he had taken under his allegiance.

Tacitus' words reflect the loss of *fides militaris* as a consequence of Galba's failure to uphold the moral obligation that the concept of *fides* expected him to maintain. Since Galba had taken soldiers under his protection, he was obliged by *fides* to act as their "patron." By having them executed, Galba had violated a principle that the Romans considered sacrosanct.

It is Galba's appointed successor, Piso, who mentions *fides* twice in his speech to the bodyguards (1.30.2–3). Yet this speech, although its purpose was to secure the loyalty of these soldiers, "contains some remarkably false notes ... and verges on the hysterical."²⁴ In contrast to Galba's (and Piso's) failure to gain the trust of the army, Otho receives the formal oath of allegiance from his soldiers (1.36.2–3).²⁵ But this allegiance depends on a more personal relationship: it is a private, as it were, relationship between the general and his men, not the *fides publica* that repeatedly appears on coins of this period.²⁶ Thus, *fides* can easily change sides, and the legions' oath of allegiance becomes a mere formal act, taken in hesitation (cf. 1.55.1–2).²⁷ In this circumstance, where *fides* has vanished (*nec cuiquam ultra fides aut memoria prioris sacramenti, sed quod in seditionibus accidit, unde plures erant, omnes fuere*, "after this no one retained any loyalty or any recollection of his late allegiance, but, as usually happens in mutinies, the side of the majority became the side of all," 1.56.1), and those who uphold it are found guilty for the very reason of keeping *fides*,²⁸ it comes as no surprise

that Vitellius' mutiny succeeds. As the situation between Otho and Vitellius escalates, the army's *fides* has all but lost its meaning, shifting from one side to the other:

Primus Othoni fiduciam addidit ex Illyrico nuntius, iurasse in eum Dalmatiae ac Pannoniae et Moesiae legiones. idem ex Hispania adlatum laudatusque per edictum Cluvius Rufus: et statim cognitum est conversam ad Vitellium Hispaniam. ne Aquitania quidem, quamquam ab Iulio Cordo in verba Othonis obstricta, diu mansit. nusquam fides aut amor:²⁹ metu ac necessitate huc illuc mutabantur. (Tac. *Hist.* 1.76.1).

The first news that gave Otho confidence was the announcement from Illyricum that the legions of Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Moesia had sworn allegiance to him. Similar news was received from Spain, and Cluvius Rufus was commended in an edict. Immediately afterwards it became known that Spain had gone over to Vitellius. Even Aquitania, bound though it was by the oath of allegiance to Otho, which Julius Cordus had sworn, did not long remain firm. Nowhere was there any loyalty or affection; men changed from one side to the other under the pressure of fear or necessity.

The traditional system of Roman values is crumbling under the pressure of civil war, and even when an appearance of loyalty still remains (for Otho could still rely on the loyalty of the fleet, which had sworn allegiance to him after suffering slaughter from Galba), Otho puts his freedman Moschus in charge of these soldiers:

Narbonensem Galliam adgredi statuit classe valida et partibus fida, quod reliquos caesorum ad pontem Mulvium et saevitia Galbae in custodia habitos in numeros legionis composuerat ... curam navium Moschus libertus retinebat ad observandam honestiorum fidem timmutatust.³⁰ peditum equitumque copiis Suetonius Paulinus, Marius Celsus, Annius Gallus rectores destinati; sed plurima fides Licinio Proculo praetorii praefecto. is urbanae militiae impiger, bellorum insolens, auctoritatem Paulini, vigorem Celsi, maturitatem Galli, ut cuique erat, criminando, quod facillimum factu est, pravus et callidus bonos et modestos anteibat. (Tac. *Hist.* 1.87.1–2)

He determined to attack Narbonese Gaul with his fleet, which was strong and loyal to his cause, for he had enrolled in the ranks of the legion the survivors of the slaughter at the Milvian bridge whom Galba's cruelty had kept in prison ... He put the freedman Moschus in charge of the navy, in order to check the loyalty of his superiors. He appointed to command the infantry and cavalry Suetonius Paulinus, Marius

Celsus, and Annius Gallus. The Emperor, however, placed most loyalty in Licinius Proculus, prefect of the Praetorian Guard; an active officer at home, without experience in war, he founded perpetual accusations on the influence of Paulinus, on the energy of Celsus, on the mature judgment of Gallus, in fact, on each man's special excellence, a thing most easy to do; being unscrupulous and cunning he got the better of the modest and the good.

Otho is bound to place more trust in a freedman and an equestrian than in *nobiliores* and *virī boni*. *Fides*, in this state of degeneration, is placed more on a dishonest and cunning man,³¹ and is therefore a far cry from traditional Roman *fides*, which was associated with *iustitia*, *modestia*, and *temperantia*. With Galba, *fides* began a decline that reached its lowest with Otho, where *fides* became a mere "personal allegiance." It is in the transition from Otho to Vitellius, however, that *fides* is gradually superseded by its opposite, *perfidia*, which surges together with the Vitellians, until it peaks in Book 3.

Book 2

In this climate of degeneration of traditional values, which is restricted to, and exacerbated by, the conflict between Otho and Vitellius, Tacitus is very careful not to include the Flavian-led eastern legions, which remain loyal, swearing allegiance first to Galba and then Otho. Although Tacitus does not deny that, among the Flavians, too, there were some who were pushing for war, the future emperors appear *fideles* to Rome's legitimate emperor, at least until Vitellius' betrayal. Tacitus portrays the Flavians as spectators, outside the struggle, as it were, between the corrupt Otho and Vitellius, and thus untainted by the degenerated concept of *fides* that had replaced the traditional type, which the Flavians come to embody.³² In order to be seen as unifiers, restorers of traditional values, and therefore as Rome's legitimate heirs, the Flavians could not take a firm position either for or against any contender. In this way, when they finally take action, they do so out of necessity, because they understand that in a civil war there is no certainty as to its outcome – whether one party or the other prevails, loyalty is always most uncertain:

Non fallebat duces impetus militum, sed bellantibus aliis placuit expectare. in bello civili victores victosque numquam solida fide coalescere, nec referre Vitellium an Othonem superstitem fortuna faceret.³³ (Tac. *Hist.* 2.7.1)

The ardour of the troops was not unknown to their generals, but it was judged advisable to wait for the issue of the warring parties. In civil war the conquerors and the

conquered, it was said, never unite with a genuine/durable loyalty. It matters not whether Otho or Vitellius chances to survive.

Otho and Vitellius, whom Tacitus' narrative characterizes as faithful to, and dependent on, the loyalty of a faction (whether that be the praetorian guard or the German legions), serve only to enhance further Flavian *fides*.

The Othonians' lack of *fides* is shown at the first battle of Bedriacum.³⁴ Although *virī boni* such as Paulinus, Celsus, and Gallus advise Otho to wait, he follows the advice of the man he had previously favoured (see above), the prefect Proculus, despite his inexperience, and of those who advise him not to take part in the battle. With his retreat, Otho caused uncertainty and made his soldiers, who were particularly loyal to him,³⁵ feel betrayed:

Paulino et Celso iam non adversantibus, ne principem obiectare periculis viderentur, idem illi deterioris consilii auctores perpulere, ut Brixellum concederet ac dubiis proeliorum exemptus summae rerum et imperii se ipsum reservaret. is primus dies Othonianas partes adflixit; namque et cum ipso praetoriarum cohortium et speculatorum equitumque valida manus discessit, et remanentium fractus animus, quando suspecti duces et Otho, cui uni apud militem fides, dum et ipse non nisi militibus credit, imperia ducum in incerto reliquerat. (Tac. *Hist.* 2.33.2–3)

Paulinus and Celsus no longer opposed, for they would not seem to put the emperor in the way of peril, and these same men who suggested the baser policy prevailed on him to retire to Brixellum, and thus secure from the hazards of the field, to reserve himself for the administration of empire. That day first gave the death-blow to the party of Otho. Not only did a strong detachment of the praetorian cohorts, of the body guard, and of the cavalry, depart with him, but the spirit of those who remained was broken, for the generals were under suspicion, and Otho, who alone had the confidence of the soldiers, while he himself trusted in none but them, had left the generals' authority on a doubtful footing.

The Flavians had their problems too, especially at first, at least until the rivalry between Vespasian and Mucianus was set aside. Titus was the one who succeeded in bringing the two parties together. It is very unfortunate that the section of the *Histories* that Tacitus would have devoted to Titus has not survived, for, in marking him out as the architect of the alliance between Vespasian and Mucianus, Tacitus identifies Titus as *fides* itself, as if he were the one who would have brought to completion the "return" of *fides* that Vespasian had initiated, before it was crushed again under Domitian:

ceterum hic Syriae, ille Iudaeae praepositus, vicinis provinciarum administrationibus invidia discordes, exitu demum Neronis positus odiis in medium consulere, primum

per amicos, dein, praecipua concordiae fides, Titus prava certamina communi utilitate aboleverat, natura atque arte compositus adliciendis etiam Muciani moribus.³⁶ (Tac. *Hist.* 2.5.2)

The latter [sc. Mucianus] governor of Syria, the former [sc. Vespasian] of Judaea, in the administration of these neighboring provinces jealousy had produced discord between them, but on Nero's fall they had dropped their animosities and associated their counsels, at first through friends, then Titus, who was the chief bond of union between them, by representing their common interests had terminated their mischievous feud. He was indeed a man formed both by nature and by education to attract even such a character as that of Mucianus.

It may be a coincidence, but Tacitus chooses for Titus two key words, *fides* and *concordia*, that appear most prominently on coins of this period.³⁷

While traditional *fides* (especially the military kind) is gradually degenerating in the midst of the struggle between Otho and Vitellius, *perfidia* begins to supersede *fides*, as Vitellius emerges victorious. Perhaps not coincidentally, *perfidia* first occurs in the *Histories* in connection with Vitellius, when Tacitus explains the causes for his rising:

severitate disciplinae, quam in pace inexorabilem discordiae civium resolvunt, paratis utrimque corruptoribus et perfidia impunita.³⁸ (Tac. *Hist.* 1.51.2)

Strict discipline, however relentless in time of peace, is always relaxed in civil wars, for there are men on both sides ready to corrupt, and treachery goes unpunished.

After Vitellius' victory, even those who had maintained an appearance of loyalty to Otho find it more advantageous to feign treachery:

Suetonium Paulinum ac Licinium Proculum tristi mora squalidos tenuit, donec auditi necessariis magis defensionibus quam honestis uterentur; prodicionem ultro imputabant, spatium longi ante proelium itineris, fatigationem Othonianorum, permixtum vehiculis agmen ac pleraque fortuita fraudi suae assignantes. et Vitellius credit de perfidia et fidem absolvit. (Tac. *Hist.* 2.60.1)

He [sc. Vitellius] detained Suetonius Paulinus and Licinus Proculus in all the wretchedness of an odious imprisonment; when they were heard, they resorted to a defense, necessary rather than honourable. They actually claimed credit for treachery, attributing to their own deceit the long march before the battle, the fatigue of Otho's troops, the entanglement of the line with the baggage-wagons, and many circumstances

which were really accidental. Vitellius believed in their treachery and acquitted them of loyalty.

The chiasmic structure of the last sentence, accentuated by a noticeable word-play, contributes to emphasize the reversal of values that the civil wars had brought about: *fides* becomes a crime, as it were, while *perfidia* is the "value" upon which Vitellius puts his trust.³⁹ On the opposite side, Tacitus portrays the Flavians as loyal followers of the newly established emperor (2.73), though he maliciously adds that Vespasian was in fact meditating war (2.74.1). The crucial difference between the two contenders was in their behaviour: on the one hand, a dissolute man who was acting more like a foreigner (2.73), which was a rather traditional *topos* in the characterization of internal enemies (cf., e.g., Mark Antony); on the other hand, an experienced military man who could weigh the risks of war against his personal ambition:

Versabatur ante oculos Germanici exercitus robur, notum viro militari: suas legiones civili bello inexpertas, Vitellii victrices, et apud victos plus querimoniarum quam virium. fluxam per discordias militum fidem et periculum ex singulis ...⁴⁰ (Tac. *Hist.* 2.75)

He always kept in his view the strength of the German army, with which as a military man he was well acquainted: he reflected that his own legions were without experience of a civil war, that those of Vitellius had been victorious, and that among the conquered there was more dissatisfaction than real strength. Civil strife had shaken the loyalty of the Roman soldiery, and there was danger in each single man.

Vespasian, whom Tacitus portrays in a position of "observer" (*ante oculos*), untainted by the corruption of civil war (*suas legiones civili bello inexpertas*), was able to identify the degeneration of *fides* among his opponents. Very appropriately, Tacitus emphasizes Vespasian's considerations just before *fides* reaches its lowest point at the end of the book.

Book 2 ends with Vitellius' preparations to face Vespasian. Tacitus underlines the climate of uncertainty and treachery that surrounds the Vitellian troops,⁴¹ and focuses on two men in particular, the generals Caecina and Bassus, who meditate defection to the Flavian party.⁴² Tacitus shows no sympathy for these men, whose treacherous behaviour is emphasized by two striking uses of the noun *perfidia*. Of Caecina, Tacitus says:

accedebat huc Caecinae ambitio vetus, torpor recens, nimia fortunae indulgentia soluti in luxum, seu perfidiam meditanti infringere exercitus virtutem inter artes erat.⁴³ (Tac. *Hist.* 2.99.2)

All this was aggravated by the old vanity of Caecina, and by the indolence that had of late crept over him; presuming on the excessive favour of fortune, he had abandoned himself to luxury. Perhaps he meditated perfidy, and it was part of his policy to enervate the courage of the army.

Not less flattering are Tacitus' words for Bassus:

quod non statim praefecturam praetorii adeptus foret, iniquam iracundiam flagitiosa perfidia ulciscibatur. nec sciri potest traxeritne Caecinam, an, quod evenit inter malos ut et similes sint, eadem illos pravitas impulerit.⁴⁴ (Tac. *Hist.* 2.100.3)

Because he had not immediately obtained the command of the praetorian guard, he sought to gratify his unreasonable resentment by an atrocious act of perfidy. It cannot be certainly known whether he carried Caecina with him, or (since it often happens that bad men resemble each other) the same evilness drove both.

Caecina's and Bassus' *perfidia* finds fertile soil among the Vitellian deserters, for, as Tacitus pointedly remarks in the closing chapter of Book 2 (101.1–2), after the betrayal of Galba, *fides* had become worthless (*vilem mox fidem*). Caecina strove in every way to undermine the loyalty of the centurions who had remained faithful to Vitellius, while Bassus had an even easier task, because the fleet, of which he was in charge, was much more prone to changing allegiance on account of the remembrance of recent events (*Basso eadem molienti minor difficultas erat, lubrica ad mutandam fidem classe ob memoriam recentis pro Othone militiae*).⁴⁵ Since Caecina and Bassus would in the end join the Flavians, one may be tempted to see in their negative characterization an indirect critique of the Flavians' strategy. However, Tacitus is capitalizing on their *perfidia* to underline the change that was to come with the advent of the Flavians, for it is in Book 3 that Flavian *fides* will give Vitellius' *perfidia* the coup de grâce.⁴⁶

Book 3

Fides appears prominently as a key word at the opening of Book 3: meliore fato fideque partium Flavianarum duces consilia belli tractabant ("on the Flavian side the generals arranged their plans for the war with greater loyalty and greater success"),⁴⁷ and an assessment of the armies' *fides* is what characterizes the Flavians' first moves in their march towards Italy.⁴⁸ The Flavians' leadership, in the hands of Primus and Mucianus, was dictated more by these men's ambition than by Vespasian's instructions:⁴⁹ this, at least, is what the narrative suggests, and it is in line with

Tacitus' portrayal of the Flavians as outside players in this dark phase of the campaign, when the most significant advantage is surely produced by Caecina's betrayal:

quod si adfuisset fides, aut opprimi universis Vitellianorum viribus duae legiones, nondum coniuncto Moesico exercitu, potuere, aut retro actae deserta Italia turpem fugam conscivissent. sed Caecina per varias moras prima hostibus prodidit tempora belli, dum, quos armis pellere promptum erat, epistulis increpat, donec per nuntios pacta perfidiae firmaret.⁵⁰ (Tac. *Hist.* 3.9.2)

Had he added loyalty to his other advantages, those two legions, which had not been joined by the army of Moesia, might have been crushed by the united strength of the Vitellians, or driven back and compelled to evacuate Italy in a disgraceful retreat. Caecina, however, by various delays betrayed to the enemy the early opportunities of the campaign, assailing by letters those whom it was easy to drive out by force of arms, until by his envoys he settled the conditions of his treachery.

Widespread treachery among the Vitellians contrasts with the behaviour of the Flavian generals, who show a unified front, despite having their own problems.

In Rome, where Junius Blaesus, one of the few men loyal to Vitellius, succumbed to intrigue,⁵¹ the delicate task of mediating a peace with Vitellius fell to the city prefect Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's older brother. Although Tacitus' portrait of Sabinus is somewhat ambiguous, the historian does not question his *fides*, both to his younger brother and to Vitellius, by whom he will be betrayed. Even in this dark moment, the Flavian party never ceases to uphold its loyalty to Rome. It is indeed Vitellius' betrayal that sets in motion a chain reaction that almost destroyed the city, and burned down its most prominent building, the Capitol:

togatam nempe se et unum e senatoribus: dum inter Vespasianum ac Vitellium proeliis legionum, captivitatibus urbium, deditionibus cohortium iudicatur, iam Hispaniis Germaniisque et Britannia desciscentibus, fratrem Vespasiani mansisse in fide, donec ultro ad condiciones vocaretur. pacem et concordiam victis utilia, victoribus tantum pulchra esse. si conventionis paeniteat, non se, quem perfidia deceperit, ferro peteret, non filium Vespasiani vix puberem – quantum occisis uno sene et uno iuvene profici? –: iret obviam legionibus et de summa rerum illic certaret: cetera secundum eventum proelii cessura. (Tac. *Hist.* 3.70.2–3)

He [sc. Sabinus] was only a civilian and a member of the Senate: while the rivalry of Vitellius and Vespasian was being settled by conflicts between legions, by the capture

of cities, by the capitulation of cohorts, with Spain, Germany, and Britain already in revolt, he, though Vespasian's brother, had still remained firm to his allegiance, till actually invited to discuss terms of agreement. Peace and harmony bring advantage to the conquered, but only credit to the conqueror. If Vitellius repented their compact, he ought not to take arms against Sabinus, whom he treacherously deceived, or against the son of Vespasian, who was all but a boy. What would be gained by the slaughter of one old man and one youth? He ought rather to march and meet the legions, and fight there for the empire; everything else would follow the issue of that struggle.

Since, as we have seen, *perfidia* becomes the defining trait of the Vitellians as Book 3 progresses (with *fides* beginning to shift in favour of the Flavians),⁵² it comes as no surprise that the climax of the book, the burning of the Capitol, naturally follows the treachery of Vitellius himself, who is thus blamed for such a sacrilegious act.⁵³ It may be only a coincidence, but the temple of Fides stood on the Capitol. We do not know whether the temple was destroyed or survived, but the physical burning of the Capitol may be read as a metaphorical assault on *fides* itself. After the Flavians prevailed, they restored the Capitol and, we may infer, also the temple of Fides.⁵⁴ When Book 3 comes to an end, Tacitus takes one last opportunity to pass his moral judgment on Vitellius and the men who had betrayed him to Vespasian. Their last betrayal was only the culmination of a series of desertions that the civil wars had produced:

rei publicae haud dubie intererat Vitellium vinci, sed imputare perfidiam non possunt qui Vitellium Vespasiano prodidere, cum a Galba descivissent. (Tac. *Hist.* 3.86.2)

Doubtless it was good for the state that Vitellius should be overthrown, but they who betrayed Vitellius to Vespasian cannot make a merit of their treachery, since they had themselves revolted from Galba.

Conclusion

The passages that I have selected for analysis, and which I believe to be significant, show that the noticeable incidence of *fides* and its cognates in the first three books of the *Histories*, far from being chance occurrences, demonstrate that Tacitus is employing the concept of *fides* with a well-defined design. At times, there may be irony, but such irony is more often Tacitus' way of interpreting the events he narrates.⁵⁵ While he expresses sharp criticism for the three short-lived emperors of that fatal year, his

views of the Flavians are more difficult to evaluate, given the loss of the later books of the *Histories*. I am inclined to believe, however, that Tacitus is reflecting, in his use of *fides* and its cognates, the Flavians' desire to be seen as the restorers of the old Roman traditions, which included *fides*. This is not to say that Tacitus was adhering to the Flavians' official propaganda; but his narrative suggests that he was aware of their strategy.⁵⁶ *Fides* was gradually lost during the period of the civil wars, especially the *fides* of the army, which shifted dangerously from one contender to the other until it lost all its significance and was replaced by *perfidia*. Paradoxically, by the time the civil wars reached their climax, *fides* became dangerous, a quality of which one needed to be acquitted.⁵⁷ By contrast, it was *perfidia* that assured success and advancement.⁵⁸ But the Tacitean narrative clearly shows that, in the end, the people who had thrived thanks to *perfidia* were brought down by that same weapon. The Flavians, despite some dark moments, are never directly accused of *perfidia* and emerge virtually unscathed from Tacitus' moral history. If his account of Domitian in the later books of the *Histories* had survived, a very different picture would surely have emerged.⁵⁹

APPENDIX: *FIDES* (AND ITS COGNATES) IN TACITUS

FIDES

Histories (n = 77)

Book 1 (21)	Book 2 (21)	Book 3 (19)	Book 4 (13)	Book 5 (3)
1.3, 3.1, 9.3, 14.2, 15.4, 22.2, 26.1, 30.2, 30.3, 37.3, 39.2, 51.5, 56.1, 59.1, 71.2 (2x), 75.1, 76.1, 87.2 (2x), 88.3	3.2, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 9.2 (2x), 11.1, 20.2, 33.3, 50.2, 60.1, 72.2, 75, 78.2, 93.2, 96.1, 98.1 (2x), 101.1, 101.2	1.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.3, 9.2, 30.2, 38.3, 39.1, 39.2, 41.2, 42.2, 48.2, 54.3, 57.1, 61.3, 65.1, 66.1, 70.2, 73.3	18.1, 21.2, 23.4, 28.2, 30.2, 34.2, 58.2, 60.1 (2x), ⁶⁰ 66.3, 69.1, 85.1, 86.1	5.1, 25.1, 26.2

<i>fides militaris</i> ⁶¹	9.3, 26.1, 30.2, 30.3, 37.3, 39.2, 56.1, 59.1, 71.2 (2x), 75.1, 76.1, <87.2 (2x)> <5.2>, 6.1, 7.1, 9.2, 11.1, 20.2, 33.3, 60.1, 75, 93.2, 96.1, 98.1, 101.1, 101.2 1.1, <5.1, 5.2>, 6.3, 9.2 (also adv. at 9.5), 30.2, 38.3, <39.2>, 41.2 (also adj.), 42.2, <48.2>, [54.3], 57.1, 61.3
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Annals (n = 68)

<i>Books 1–6 (43)</i>	<i>Books 11–12 (8)</i>	<i>Books 13–16 (17)</i>
1. (11): 11.2, 18.3, 30.1, 34.4, 35.4, 41.1, 43.4, 55.1, 58.1, 70.5, 72.2 2. (9): 1.2, 9.1, 12.1, 24.3, 40.2, 42.1, 63.2, 68.2, 78.1 3. (7): 11.2, 12.6, 16.3, 47.1, 49.2, 62.1, 73.2 4. (6): 9.1, 10.1, 12.2, 34.3, 47.1, 59.2 6. (10): 9.2, 17.2, 17.4, 22.3, 24.1, 30.3, 30.4, 37.2, 37.4, 43.2	11. (3): 6.1, 17.2, 19.2 12. (5): 14.1, 27.1, 30.2, 36.1, 41.2	13. (8): 5.1, 15.3, 20.2, 21.4, 31.2, 34.2, 37.3, 54.3 15. (7): 11.3, 20.4, 37.1, 50.4, 58.3, 59.3, 64.3 16. (2): 2.1, 6.1

Opera Minora (n = 18)

<i>Dialogus</i>	<i>Agricola</i>	<i>Germania</i>
10.6, 10.8, 31.5, 35.4	1.3, 10.1, 11.2, 32.1, 33.2, 41.4	3.4, 10.3, 10.5, 24.4, 28.5, 37.1, 39.1, 45.1

PERFIDIA⁶²*Histories* (n = 20)

<i>Book 1 (1)</i>	<i>Book 2 (4)</i>	<i>Book 3 (10)</i>	<i>Book 4 (5)</i>	<i>Book 5</i>
51.2	27.2, 60.1, 99.2, 100.3	4.1, 9.2, 12.1, 31.4, 46.1 (<i>sociali</i>), 57.1, 61.3, 62.2, 70.3, 86.2	16.3, 25.1, 27.2, 33.2, 57.3	

Annals (n = 10)

<i>Books 1–6 (4)</i>	<i>Books 11–12 (3)</i>	<i>Books 13–16 (3)</i>
1. 55.1, 58.3	11. 5.2	13. 35.1, 39.2
2. 8.4, 46.1	12. 12.2, 46.1	15. 54.4

Other Cognates of Fides in Tacitus' Opera

	<i>Histories 1–3</i>	<i>Histories 4–5</i>
<i>fidenter</i>	3. 9.5	
<i>fidelis</i>		
<i>fidus</i>	(23) 1. 31.3, 45.2, 52.3, 64.2, 70.2, 87.1 2. 32.1, 46.2, 59.1, 66.3, 76.5, 92.2 3. 13.1, 15.1, 40.1, 41.2, 42.2, 46.2, 52.3, 57.1, 58.2, 62.2, 66.1	(6) 4. 27.3, 57.2, 67.1, 83.1 5. 6.2, 21.1

<i>infidus</i>	1. 22.1 3. 55.3	4. 56.1, 56.2
<i>perfidus</i>		5. 16.2
<i>perfidiosus</i>		

	<i>Annals</i> 1–6	<i>Annals</i> 11–12	<i>Annals</i> 13–16
<i>fidenter</i>			
<i>fidelis</i>			15. 67.2
<i>fidus</i>	(7) ⁶³ 1. 52.3, 57.1 3. 1.2, 46.4 4. 68.4 5. 8.1 6. 31.1	(5) 11. 19.1, 24.6 12. 8.2, 13.1, 40.2	(5) 13. 37.1, 55.1 15. 15.3, 28.1, 54.3
<i>infidus</i>	2. 3.1	12. 31.2	14. 23.1
<i>perfidus</i>	2. 13.1		
<i>perfidiosus</i>			16. 32.3

	<i>Dialogus</i>	<i>Agricola</i>	<i>Germania</i>
<i>fidenter</i>			
<i>fidelis</i>	34.5 (adv. fidelius)		
<i>fidus</i>		14.1 19.2	41.1
<i>infidus</i>			
<i>perfidus</i>			
<i>perfidiosus</i>			

NOTES

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¹ See e.g., Ash 1999; Joseph 2012.

² See e.g., Boyle 2002; Stocks 2014: 86n21, with further bibliography; Tuck 2016. Cf. also below note 12.

- 3 The dissertation of Fromchuck 1972 has been very useful. Although I do not share all of her assumptions and conclusions, I have often benefited from her selection of passages and the tables she compiled with occurrences and statistics on the use of *fides*. For the concept of *fides* in Flavian literature, mainly poetry, see e.g., Pomeroy 2010b; Gallia 2012, esp. 210–12; Stocks 2014. Pomeroy 2010a: 42n52 points out Tacitus' emphasis on *fides* in the *Histories*.
- 4 See Fromchuck 1972: 209–16, where she notes that, in the *Histories*, *fides* in this context is used mainly in connection with the Flavians.
- 5 Cf. the Appendix to this chapter.
- 6 These figures, which are drawn from Gerber-Greef (461b–465a) and have been electronically cross-checked, differ to some degree from those of Fromchuck 1972.
- 7 On *perfidia* as an antonym of *fides*, see Freyburger 1986: 84–95.
- 8 In his preference for *fidus* over *fidelis* (49:1), Tacitus follows Sallust (12:4) and Curtius (9:4) but not Livy. *Fidus* never occurs in Caesar or Quintilian and is rare in Cicero, but is highly favoured in poetry (Virgil uses it twenty-four times, *fidelis* only once). See Hellegouarc'h 1972: 35–7; Adams 1973: 139n22; Woodman and Martin 1996: *ad* 3.46.4; Woodman and Kraus 2014: *ad* Agr. 14.1; and Malloch 2013: *ad* Ann. 11.19.1. Just like *fides*, the adjective, too, is used disproportionately more often in *Histories* 1–3 (see the Appendix to this chapter).
- 9 Such an exceptional use is indeed very appropriate for the uniqueness of Subrius Flavius' claim that none of Nero's soldiers had been more loyal to him. Cf. also the comparative adverb *fidelius* at *Dial.* 34.5, where it means "more lastingly" (Mayer 2001: *ad loc.*).
- 10 See the Appendix (Tacitus never uses *infidelis*). At 1.22.1, *infidus* describes astrologers (*mathematici*), who were evidently non-Romans; at 3.55.3, it characterizes the advice to which Vitellius was exposed (*infidis consiliis obnoxius*). In Book 4, it is directly applied to the remnants of the Vitellian army, focalized through the conspirators' eyes, and to the legions of the Roman legate Vocola. Similar to *fides*, the adjective appears to mark a shift toward degeneration. The three instances in the *Annals* refer to lack of military *fides* among foreign peoples: 2.3.1 and 14.23.1 (Armenia) and 12.31.2 (Britain).
- 11 There is no unanimous consensus among scholars as what constitutes a "virtue." See Grant 1954; Wallace-Hadrill 1981; Fears 1981; Classen 1991; and Noreña 2001 and 2011, esp. 37–100. The last identifies eleven virtue types that appear on the imperial coinage. Grant 1954: 149–50 considers *fides* a "personification," not a virtue, since it is never accompanied by *Augusti*, *Augusta*, *vel sim.* (cf. Noreña 2011: 59). Coins are our best evidence to measure propaganda. Epigraphic evidence may offer supplementary materials, but it is not conspicuous with regard to *fides* (there is a useful list of inscriptions and literary sources related to the temple of Fides and the Capitol at Reusser 1993:

202–15). Vespasian awarded the title *pia fidelis* (first awarded by Claudius in AD 42) to the *Legio II Adiutrix* in 70 for its exceptional loyalty. The same title is found on several military diplomas of the Flavian period. See Holder 1999 and Morgan 2015: 82. For the traditional iconographical representations of *Fides*, see Freyburger 1986: 275–80 and Reusser 1993: 86–112.

- 12 There are at least two coins from the time of Claudius where a female figure may be interpreted as *Fides Praetorianorum*, but it is not certain (RIC I Claudius 149). As far as I can tell, there are no certain instances of *fides* (expressly stated or even implied by clasped hands, a traditional representation of *fides*) dating from the Julio-Claudian period. Although *fides* did not hold as prominent a place in the Augustan propaganda as other virtues, it appeared in a famous passage of the *Res Gestae* (32.3), and its “return” is celebrated at Hor. *Saec.* 57. Piccaluga 1981, who discusses these two passages, argues that, before the Augustan age, *Fides* was a minor deity and that the goddess received full anthropomorphic features only from the time of Augustus (718–20). This “return” of *Fides* marked Augustus’ desire to break with the preceding times, where *perfidia* could always find fertile soil. The absence of *fides* from coins of the Augustan period, however, remains noteworthy (Freyburger 1986: 238: “il est remarquable que cette notion ne figure pas sur les monnaies augustéennes,” quoting J.P. Boucher). For more details, see Stocks in this volume.
- 13 See RRC I 454; cf. Piccaluga 1981: 718; Freyburger 1986: 275–6; Cody 2003; and Clark 2007a: 292. But cf. Gruen 1982: 59: “As a symbol of Roman responsibility in foreign affairs the concept already held pride of place by the early 3rd century. A Locrian coin type depicts Roma as crowned by a personified *πίστις*, possibly in the aftermath of the Pyrrhic war.”
- 14 RIC I Civil Wars 118–22, 126, 131. Wallace-Hadrill 1981: 311: “In the wars of 68–69 the contending parties, starting with Galba and Vindex, used the coinage, necessarily minted to finance their war-effort, to advertise their hopes and ideals ... Appropriately enough all their personifications (except *Securitas*) have republican precedents.” Indeed the *fides*-type coins from the time of Galba appear to follow a republican rather than an imperial model. See also Cody 2003.
- 15 RIC I Galba 135. Also *concordia*, which is just as common as *fides* in coins of the civil war period is rather common under Galba (mostly *c. provinciarum* or *aug.*), Vitellius (*c. praetorianorum*, *p.r.* or *aug.*), and especially Vespasian (mostly from his earlier period, i.e., AD 70–4) and Titus, but comparatively rare in Domitian (significantly, *c. exercituum* becomes extremely common under Nerva). On the effects that *c. exercituum* must have had on contemporaries, see Syme 1958: 754. Noreña 2011, in Appendix 3 and 4, provides extensive data on silver and bronze reverse types for the Flavian period: the most common personifications appear to be *Aequitas*, *Annona*, *Concordia*, *Fides*, *Felicitas*, *Fortuna*, and *Pax*.

- 16 *RIC* I Vitellius 27–30, 42, 47, 52–4, 55 (*praetorianorum*), 67.
- 17 *RIC* II.1 Vespasian 70–2, 156, 229. All coins of this type are from AD 71 (minted in Rome). For the numismatic evidence under the Flavians, see also Stocks in this volume.
- 18 AD 71–8: 300, 301, 402, 444, 484, 520, 528, 571, 625, 1163–5, 1210–14, 1232, 1254–6, 1475, 1485, 1488, 1495 (Rome, Lyon, and Ephesus).
- 19 *RIC* II.1 Titus 224, 382 (Titus was especially fond of the *pietas* type, of which there is only one other example from Galba and one from Domitian; on the close relationship between *pietas* and *fides*, see e.g., Lind 1992: 16); Domitian 214, 215, 288, 289, 368, 369, 378, 379, 407, 413, 414, 478, 486, 533, 534, 542, 543, 642, 647. All these types come from Rome. Domitian apparently began to mint this type in AD 84 (the year he accepted the ten-year consulship) and stopped after 89; see Bernstein 2008: 156.
- 20 Fromchuck 1972: 198. I disagree, however, with some of Fromchuck's identifications (see Appendix): at 1.87.2 and 3.5.1–2, *fides* occurs twice, and in both cases, I believe, as *f. m.* Whether Fromchuck missed one of these two instances or interpreted only one as *f. m.*, I cannot tell. At 2.5.2 and 3.48.2 (both discussed below), *fides* can be interpreted *also* in its military meaning. At 3.39.2, it is surely *f. m.*, whereas at 3.54.3 (*de fide constantiaque*), *fides* has more the sense of "trustworthiness." Thus the instances of *f. m.* rise to over forty, a stunning frequency. For convenience, I will translate *fides* as "loyalty" in this context.
- 21 The Latin text is that of Wellesley 1989 with minor modifications. Translations are adapted from Moore 1925.
- 22 Cf. also Fromchuck 1972: 59.
- 23 Cf. also 1.6.2, 31.2.
- 24 Damon 2003: *ad loc.*
- 25 Tacitus uses the word *sacramentum* here.
- 26 On coins of both Galba and Vitellius, but not Otho. Otho particularly enjoyed the praetorians' loyalty, which never abandoned him, even after the Vitellians' promises and threats (1.75.1). Cf. also 2.20.2.
- 27 Tacitus remarks that, when the oath was taken on behalf of the senate and people of Rome, these were "by now obsolete names" (*obliterata iam nomina*). Cf. 1.56.2: *id sacramentum inane visum*.
- 28 Cf. 1.59.1: *centuriones ... damnatos fidei crimine* with Damon 2003: *ad loc.* Particularly interesting is the case of Celsus (1.71.2), whose loyalty to Galba, a *crimen*, Vitellius "forgives," thus earning Celsus' *fides integra*.
- 29 Although the combination of *amor* and *fides*, which Tacitus has also at *Agr.* 41.4 (coupled with *malignitas* and *livor*; but cf. also *Hist.* 1.1.3), is not particularly unusual (with examples both in prose, esp. Cicero, and poetry), *amor* usually does not characterize military *fides*. It is therefore possible that Tacitus is here expressing a more general condition, and not just that of military *fides*.

- 30 The text is uncertain. Moschus had been in the same position under Nero and Galba. Damon 2003: *ad loc.* compares *Ann.* 14.39.1.
- 31 Eventually, Otho will pay for his mistakes, for Proculus will give bad military advice, because of his inexperience, and, once caught by Vitellius, will betray Otho.
- 32 The loyalty of the Flavians to Rome is repeatedly celebrated on coins of this period, for, as I have shown above, *fides publica* gradually becomes the most common coin-type.
- 33 The phrase *solida fides* occurs elsewhere only at *Pl. Mer.* 378 and *Sen. Thy.* 972.
- 34 Although *fides* is mentioned just before the first battle, it is never mentioned during the two battles at Bedriacum (Fromchuck 1972: 220), as if Tacitus wished to emphasize its disappearance.
- 35 There seems to be some tragic irony here: if, on the one hand, Otho's soldiers showed true *fides* to their general, their *fides* began to waver because of the questionable decision of their general.
- 36 The phrase *praecipua fides*, a remarkable expression for which Heubner 1963–8: *ad loc.* compares *Luc.* 2.243, occurs also at 4.85.1, but in a completely different sense (= "trustworthiness"); it first occurs at *Nep. Lys.* 2.2, but also *Apul. Apol.* 14 and, in a technical meaning, *Iust. Dig.* 22.3.13. Cf. also 2.4.2 *ingens rerum fiducia* (also of Titus) with Ash 2007a: *ad loc.* The opening chapters of *Histories* 2 contribute to marking Titus out as the "chosen one"; Tacitus praises Titus' decision and highlights the favourable omens he had received at Paphos. (On the importance of omens in the *Histories*, see Shannon 2014, esp. 277–81 for this episode.) Cf. also Fromchuck 1972: 116.
- 37 See above notes 18 and 19 and cf. Stocks in this volume. This is the only instance in Tacitus (but found also in other writers) where *fides* and *concordia* are combined. Interestingly, their opposite, *perfidia* and *discordia*, are combined only in Tacitus: at 1.51.2 and 3.12.1, both times in reference to the Vitellians. On the close relationship between *fides* and *concordia*, see Freyburger 1986: 304–17.
- 38 Also the second instance of *perfidia* occurs in connection with the Vitellian army (2.27.2).
- 39 Cf. also note 28. While Proculus' behaviour was perhaps to be expected, Paulinus' attempt to appear disloyal to Otho is evidence that there is no room for a *vir bonus* in the collapse of values that the civil wars cause.
- 40 While the expression *fluxa fides* occurs also at *Pl. Capt.* 439, Tacitus evidently inherited it from Sallust (*Iug.* 111.2) and Livy (28.6.11, 40.50.5). It is used elsewhere for barbarians (3.48.2) and slaves (4.23.4). The example at 3.48.2 has some relevance because it involves the Flavians: Tacitus describes a situation of chaos created by a certain freedman Anicetus, who had stirred a rebellion in the Pontus, only to be betrayed by the local king (of the Sedochezi tribe), whose *fides* he had bought with bribes. It fell upon one of Vespasian's men to suppress

the rebellion, which he stopped by buying the barbarian's *fides* at a higher price. Although Vespasian was not directly involved in this episode, Tacitus may be implying a certain criticism in this conduct. For other examples of *barbara fides* in Tacitus, see Fromchuck 1972: 86–8. Cf. Morgan 2015: 95n70.

- 41 Uncertainty increases as Vitellius' generals defect to the Flavians. Cf. e.g., 3.43.
- 42 Caecina's wavering loyalty is first mentioned at 2.93.2 (*creditur Caecinae fides fluitasse*), where Tacitus uses a unique expression (only here in classical Latin), which recalls the *fluxa fides* above (see note 40). Indeed, the next two occurrences of *fides*, which are both applied to Vitellius' men, are examples of insincere loyalty (96.1 and 98.1), soon to change to the Flavian party (cf. also 3.38.3, 41.2, 42.2). Fromchuck 1972: 173n38 points out that, from this point on, most occurrences of *fides* refer to a transfer of allegiance.
- 43 *Perfidiam meditari* occurs only here in Latin (Heubner 1963–8: *ad loc.*). On these final chapters of Book 2, see also Sailor 2008: 167–8, who notes that the “insistent use of the vocabulary and imagery of loyalty and treachery is striking.”
- 44 Also *flagitiosa perfidia* occurs only here in extant Latin literature.
- 45 Although, grammatically, the adjective *lubrica* evidently modifies *classe*, it is undeniable that the slippery nature of the fleet “affects” their *fides*. For the concept of “memory as motive” in Tacitus, see Gowing 2016, esp. 51n12 for this passage, and also 1.56.1.
- 46 Cf. the case of Flavianus at 3.4.1, a man who had betrayed first Galba then Vitellius, but who was eventually pardoned by Vespasian.
- 47 On the alliterative force of *fato fideque* and the parallels for *melior fide*, see Heubner 1963–8: *ad loc.* (add Luc. 5.348; Sen. *Clem.* 1.9.11; Quint. *Inst.* 7.4.35). On the opening of Book 3, see also Sailor 2008: 169–71.
- 48 The Suebi, for example, chose loyalty to Rome, while Porcius Septiminius, governor of Raetia, remained loyal to Vitellius (3.5.1–2). Some Vitellian cohorts were forced by fear to change loyalty (*pavore ad mutandam fidem cogerent*, 3.6.3). Antonius Primus uses a similar “incentive” at Cremona (3.30.2).
- 49 On the character of Antonius Primus, see Ash 1999: 147–65.
- 50 Cf. Caecina's *perfidia* with the loyalty that the Flavian generals reiterate in their reply (*pro causa fidenter*, 3.9.5). *Perfidia* is a common trait of the Vitellian generals (*perfidia ducum*, 3.12.1), and of Caecina in particular. But while treachery is prized among the Vitellians, Caecina is censured for his *perfidia* (3.31.4). After the battle of Cremona, the Vitellian remnants gradually defect to the Flavians: they are rewarded for and compete in *perfidia* (*nec ulla apud Vitellianos flagitii poena, et praemiis defectorum versa fides ac reliquum perfidiae certamen*, 3.61.3). Cf. also 2.60.1 discussed above. Fromchuck 1972: 170–3.
- 51 3.39.2: *Blaeso super claritatem natalium et elegantiam morum fides obstinata fuit* (but the text is uncertain here: some codd. read *fidei obstinatio*). *Fides*

obstinata occurs also at 5.5.1, and nowhere else in Latin. The other exception was Fabius Valens, whose loyalty to Vitellius was made conspicuous by the *perfidia* of others (3.62.2).

- 52 Significantly, *fides* last occurs at 3.61.3 (see above, note 50), where it is defined as *versa* ("turned upside down"), and the only thing left is *perfidiae certamen*.
- 53 Even though Tacitus does not take a firm position as to who was physically responsible for setting the Capitol on fire (cf. 3.71.4, 75.3), his narrative undoubtedly places the moral blame on Vitellius. On this episode, see e.g., Ash 2007b.
- 54 Cf. Freyburger 1986: 267n166, citing Suet. *Vesp.* 8; Reusser 1993: 60. The temple of *Fides* is not discussed by Darwall-Smith 1996.
- 55 Fromchuck 1972, esp. in chapter 5, was a strong supporter of Tacitean irony.
- 56 Syme 1958: 754–6 had noted that Tacitus made deliberate choices in his use of imperial virtues in relation to each ruler, observing that he used them sparingly, "with extreme distaste. They are seldom allowed, save in speeches, and these serve to illustrate his deliberate choice, his delicate feeling for language." In his carefully weighed use of *fides*, Tacitus seems to be doing something very similar indeed.
- 57 Fromchuck 1972: 79–82.
- 58 Fromchuck 1972: 216 interestingly observes that the loss of Roman *fides* and its assimilation to *barbara fides* may have been caused, in Tacitus' eyes, by armies that had been stationed for too long among barbarians.
- 59 Joseph 2012, in his Epilogue, suggests that even Book 4, which apparently deals with a more peaceful period, in fact continues the escalation motif that ran across Books 1–3. There are several episodes that suggest that the civil war is not over. Since the early books, Joseph argues, seem to prepare for the final books of Domitian's terror, it is possible that Tacitus wishes to suggest a never-ending state of civil war at Rome.
- 60 There is a typo in Wellesley's text in this chapter. The paragraph division is lacking a section "2."
- 61 My instances differ slightly from Fromchuck (1972) 198. I used angle brackets <...> to add passages that Fromchuck does not include, and square brackets [...] to exclude passages that Fromchuck includes.
- 62 There are no occurrences in the *Opera Minora*.
- 63 At 4.10.1, I follow Ritter's *fidei*.

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